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STREANSHALL ABBEY:

OR, THE

DANISH INVASION.

ENTERED AT STATIONER'S HALL.

STREANSHALL ABBEY:

OR, THE

DANISH INVASION.

A PLAY OF FIVE ACTS:

As first performed at the

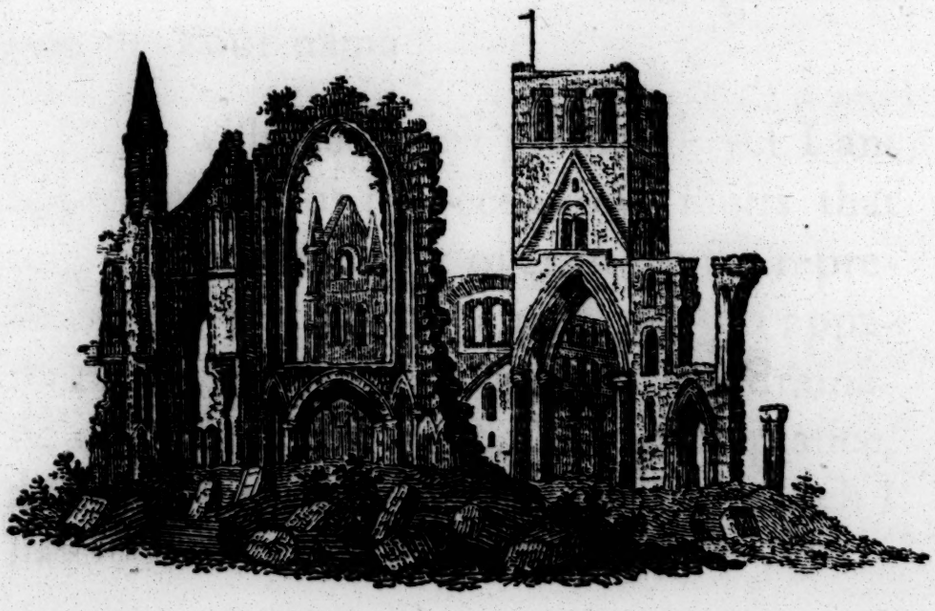
THEATRE IN WHITBY,

Dec. 2d. 1799.

WRITTEN BY FRANCIS GIBSON, ESQ. F. A. S.

Second Edition.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar. HOR.



Whitby,

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1800.

GR III
BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY MULGRAVE.

MADAM,

YOUR Ladyſhip having honoured the ſecond repreſentation of Streanſhall Abbey with Your preſence and approbation, it excited a wiſh in the Author that it might appear to the world under the ſanction of Your name:

That wiſh has been gratified; yet I am apprehenſive for its reception: faults that might paſs tranſiently over in ſcenic repreſentation, will, I am afraid, be too apparent from the preſs;---but, as a firſt dramatic eſſay, it is offered to Your acceptance, as a ſmall mark of the reſpect with which I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your Ladyſhip's

moſt obedient humble ſervant

FRANCIS GIBSON.

WHITBY, Feb. 2d.
1800.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE favourable reception of the firſt edition of this Play, has already rendered a ſecond neceſſary; and the Author now ſubmits his work to the Public, free from thoſe apprehenſions which naturally attend a firſt publication. It has paſſed the ordeal of criticiſm unwounded by cenſure, and that approbation which in ſome meaſure flowed from local circumſtances and the partialities of friendſhip, has been ſtrengthened by more general and leſs equivocal applauſe. The examination of his play has proved more favourable than the fears of the Author led him to expect; for thoſe who are acquainted with the pleaſures of compoſition muſt be aware, that a writer's judgment of himſelf is ſeldom ſatisfactory, until it has been confirmed by the world: the facility with which he produces his lines, or the difficulty with which he embodies his ideas, ſometimes raiſes their value; but theſe teſts of merit are dubious, and the ſatisfaction which accompanies them languid and inanimate, unleſs vivified by the genial rays of public approbation. A ſucceſs equally gratifying to the Author's feelings and his pride, has attended his piece both on the ſtage and in the cloſet: he has no objections to repel which the caprice of an audience might

might have raiſed, no errours to defend which the malignity of criticiſm might have attacked, no faults to vindicate which the penetration of genius might have diſcovered. He therefore offers it again to the Public with the conviction (the happieſt reward of his labour) that his endeavours to contribute to the elegant amuſements of the Public, have not been unattended with ſucceſs.

In the preſent edition, no alterations of any magnitude are attempted. To have improved perhaps had not been impoſſible; but the labour of correction generally yields to the ſeducing pleaſures of compoſition, and that time is more happily employed which we dedicate to purſuits embelliſhed by novelty, than the hours which we ſpend in removing defects or improving beauties. No labour is more irkſome than the taſk of reviſion: it is true that periods may be harmonized, words tranſpoſed, and epithets changed; but the ſolid body of the fabric remains, and the additions that can be made to its ſtrength or beauty, are ſeldom deſerving of the expence of time and application which they coſt: with this perſuaſion the Author is contented that his play ſhould appear as it was firſt printed; chuſing rather to employ his leiſure on original compoſitions, than to undertake the office of improving what is already in the hands of the Public.

Whitby, November
5th. 1800.

THE Events of the following Piece are ſuppoſed to have happened in the ninth Century, in the Reign of Alfred the Great, when the ravages of the Danes were ſeverely felt in the northern parts of England, they advancing ſo far as to plunder and burn the City of York.—The ſcene lies alternately at Mulgrave Caſtle, Streanſhall Abbey, and the adjacent Coaſt. The Daniſh belief in futurity is, conformably to the Runic Mythology, accordant to the ſanguine ferocity of their character; and is contraſted with the benevolent ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which the Author has endeavoured to infuſe into the language of the Abbot.

The intelligent reader will notice a few liberties taken with Chronology, which, though unpardonable in an Hiſtorian, are generally allowed to Dramatic Writers.

*** The lines omitted in repreſentation are marked by inverted Commas.*

PROLOGUE, BY THE AUTHOR.

Spoken by Mr. BUTLER.

TO night, a native Bard hath dar'd to own
A homely tale, from native ſources drawn;
When, ten long centuries paſt, by Oſwyn's will,
The ſacred pile firſt crown'd yon eaſtern hill;
Within whoſe boſom, ſav'd from general doom,
Repos'd the precious gifts of Greece and Rome:
Hail! once protecting walls, who from the flame
Guarded a Tully's and a Maro's name,
When, from barbarians, learning took her flight,
And ſcience mourn'd her late extinguiſh'd light.
Low lies thy glory, once that roſe ſo high!
While hiſtory records it with a ſigh:
No more the hoſpitable kitchen's blaze,
Directs the pilgrim through the foreſt's maze!
There, after ſlight repaſt, his weary head
Found ſoft repoſe upon the ruſhy bed,
Then rouſed by the matin's ſilver ſound,
Refreſh'd and light, again he preſs'd the ground.
No longer gathering crouds impatient wait,
To meet their commons at the abbey gate!
No—all is ſilent—long ſince ſunk to reſt!
All, ſave the ſwallow twittering from its neſt,
The chilling blaſt that ſweeps the roofleſs choir,
Or clamorous rooks around each mould'ring ſpire.
Though low thus fall'n, yet ſtill thy ſad remains
The hardy ſeaman's gratitude retains;
Thoſe friendly towers direct his paſſage o'er
The lurking terrors of the rock-bound ſhore;
While Hilda's ſpirit, hovering o'er her hill,
Her kind protection ſeems to grant it ſtill.

Our Bard now brings his little veſſel's freight
Of Britiſh goods, into our ſtore to-night,
Hoping to meet indulgence as they land,
Nor ſuffer ſhipwreck on his native ſtrand.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

Raymond, *Lord of Streanſhall*, . .	Mr Stackwood.
Oſbert, *an Officer under him*, . .	Mr Roberts.
Anſelm, *Abbot of Streanſhall*, . .	Mr Hindes.
Maulay, *Baron of Mulgrave*, . .	Mr Darley.
Edgar, *Son to Maulay*, ...	Mr Maſon.
Groſmont, *a Knight under Feudal Tenure to Lord Maulay* . . .	Mr W. Butler.
Sir Piers of Groſmont, *his Brother*,	Mr George.
Albert, *Falconer and Huntſman to Lord Maulay*, ...	Mr Francis.
Edwyn, *his Son, Minſtrel to Edgar*, .	Mr Bennett.
Lupino, *an Italian, Servant to Lord Raymond*, ...	Mr Tayleure.

DANES.

Guthred, *the Daniſh Chief*, . . .	Mr Meadows.
Harold, *Second in Command*, . . .	Mr Butler.
Oſcar, *Third in Command*, . . .	Mr Lewis.
Reginald, *a young Daniſh Officer*, . .	Mr Martin.

WOMEN.

Everilda, *Daughter to Lord Raymond*,	Miſs Jefferſon.
Edwina, *Couſin to Everilda, under the Guardianſhip of Lord Raymond*,	Mrs Francis.

Soldiers, Monks, Daniſh Magicians, Nuns, and Attendants,—Mr W. Tayleure, Mr Fawcett, Mrs Tayleure, Mrs Martin, Mrs Fildew, Mrs W. Tayleure, Miſs Miles, &c.

STREANSHALL ABBEY:

OR,

THE DANISH INVASION.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Hall in Lord Raymond's *Palace in Streanſhall.*

Enter EVERILDA, EDWINA, *and* ANSELM.

EVERILDA.

NOW the diſcordant ſounds of iron war
Sink in deep ſilence ; yet this awful calm
Seems but the harbinger of future woes,
Like the ſtill horror that precedes the blaſt
Ere the red ſkies pour forth their ſweeping vengeance.
No more the rural pipe and artleſs ſong
Send their wild echoes through the winding vale:
With trembling hand the peaſant ſows his grain,
And ſcarcely hopes to ſtore the future harveſt,
But, ſadly boding, ſees the hand of rapine
Bear from his hoard the fruit of all his toils.
Beſt gift of Heaven! art thou forever fled?
Come, white-rob'd Peace, and once more bleſs the land!
In ſafety bid the weary ruſtic ſleep,
And riſe to labour 'midſt his ſmiling race.

Anſ. Lady, alas! thoſe halcyon days are paſt,
When no contention knew our neighbouring Lords,
But to excel in offices of friendſhip:
Twice have I witneſs'd the extinguiſh'd feuds

Between thoſe haughty Barons; now no more
Will union bleſs us, ere the ſilent grave
Shall give me welcome to its peaceful boſom,
And theſe grey hairs be mingled with the duſt.

Eve. O think not ſo—you are the friend of peace:
My father's mild and gentle in his nature,
And eaſily to reconcilement won,
When ſmiling friendſhip claims the yielding hand.
Say why, good Anſelm, ſhould not kindred beings
Seek happineſs in intercourſe of love?
O why, as in this ſeat of contemplation,
Should not mankind make Eden bloom again?

Anſ. Alas! my daughter, theſe are but the viſions
Of dove-like innocence, untaught to dread
The wiles and woundings of a lurking foe;
But I, who through the thorny road of life
Have with attention mark'd the human heart,
With grief have witneſs'd, ev'n within theſe walls,
Poorly diſguis'd beneath contrition's robe,
The mind that rankles with ambition's wounds,
Or mourns o'er golden ſchemes diſpers'd in air;
And envy, baſeſt of all ſordid paſſions,
That bids its victim ſmile amidſt his pangs.

Eve. Heaven in its own good time give peace to all!
But tell me, Anſelm,—muſt we ſtill with terror
Await thoſe foreign ſpoilers?—ſtill muſt age
With dire forebodings ſee his riſing hopes
Spring from his arms, to meet his Country's foe,
Then borne a victim from the ſanguine field?

Anſ. I fear that ſtern occaſion may call forth

Our

Our youthful warriors to unſheath their ſwords:
No wanton motive claſps their limbs in ſteel,
No luſt of conqueſt, but the deareſt ties
That make their ſacred home the ſeat of bliſs.
Even we (ſecluded men), who are by vows
Forbid to mix in war, muſt grateful feel,
And hail thoſe youths, who ſcorning death's pale front,
Secure us every bleſſing we enjoy,
And form a rampart round the ſons of peace.

Eve. May you, good father, and your holy band,
Find tranquil paſſage to the realms above!
And favour'd be your prayers for thoſe in arms
Who brave all dangers for their Country's cauſe.

Anſ. Propitious may they be!—Daughter, farewel!
An old man's bleſſing ever ſhall await you.
I go now to prepare our holy virgins
To join in ſupplication to the throne
Where Mercy dwells—to theirs your heart will join.

[*Exit.*

Eve. O may the vows of purity prevail!
Nor fell deſtruction threat the hallow'd pile
By Hilda rais'd, in gratitude to Heaven
For all its bounties, once ſo widely ſpread
From foſtering mountains to the fruitful mead.

Edw. Such vows aſcending from the ſacred choir
Of ſelf-devoted virgins, muſt prevail.

Eve. I truſt they will—yet ſtill my drooping eye
Beholds an aged father clad in ſteel
With mind unconquer'd—but with feeble arm
Holding unequal conflict with the foe.

Edw.

Edw. O baniſh from your mind theſe gloomy viſions,
And place reliance on your future hopes;
Comfort that honour'd ſire, whoſe anxious mind
Dwells on each look and lives but in your ſmiles.
His only ſolace through the vale of years—
'Tis yours with moſt religious care to guard
That health which ſeems more precious than his own.

Eve. I truly feel, my ever gentle couſin,
In thoſe kind counſels, unabated love;
Each paſſing day devoted to ſtrict duty,
Seems but a ſmall return for all his cares.

Edw. Yet, by the waſting taper, you conſume
The time that nature claims for needful reſt,
And the chill matin-hour's ſtill mark'd by you:
Too well, alas! your alter'd look declares
Some ſecret anguiſh preying on your heart.

Eve. O! what but anguiſh can our boſoms know,
When earthly peace ſeems baniſh'd far from hence,
And ev'n the ſtorm that lours from foreign ſhores,
Its awful warning murmurs forth in vain;
When feuds inteſtine ſhed their baleful venom
On thoſe who bound in concord's golden chain,
Should feel *no* intereſt but the general weal.

Edw. And ſhould a foreign foe call forth to arms,
Thoſe, who by diſcord now are rent in twain,
Their Country's cauſe will once more make them one:
Then ſuffer not deſpair to caſt its ſhade,
But through the cloud call forth the beams of hope.—

Eve. To be again deceiv'd!—'Tis ever thus
Imagination builds the gaudy fabric;

Bright

Bright as the fleecy cloud in ſummer's ſkies
Too ſoon the riſing breeze diſſolves the charm,
And all the pleaſing viſion melts in air.
—But ſee approach my father and the chiefs
Of Streanſhall's menac'd towers; then let us haſte
On wings of duty to the beſt of men.

Enter LORD RAYMOND *and* ATTENDANTS.

EVERILDA *(kneeling)*.

My lord and father!——

Ray. ——Everilda! riſe,
Come to thy father's arms and take his bleſſing.
Thou darling image of a ſainted mother,
And heireſs of her virtues—ſweet Edwina!
My deareſt niece—my daughter's warmeſt friend,
With her thou ſhar'ſt my bleſſing and my heart.

Edw. My noble guardian!—let theſe ſtarting tears
Which gratitude calls forth, be my beſt thanks,
Due to the kind protector of an orphan,
Who in her earlieſt years, depriv'd of thoſe
Who gave her birth, a father finds in you.

Ray And ſtill ſhall find him--bleſſings meet you both!
—But now my children for awhile retire,
For vigorous counſels and ſtrong preparation
Require our preſence.——

Eve. ——May approving powers
Direct your counſels and aſſiſt your arms! [*Exit.*

Ray. To virtue's prayers, Amen!--My truſty Oſbert,
And you my friends in arms, mark well my words:
Let thoſe allotted to relieve our out-poſts,
All hold themſelves in readineſs to march;

And

And they on Ravenhill keep careful watch.
Upon the firſt alarm, the bands who guard
Our herds in folds collected, drive their charge
Beyond the weſtern hills.—Perchance even now
Thoſe fell inſatiate plunderers cut the main,
And preſs towards our ſhores.——

Oſbert. ——Their marked time
Is when the full-orb'd regent of the night,
Verging to earth, impels the ſwelling main
Into our ports to pour its ampleſt tribute;
Then vengeful vows are offer'd for her aid
To guide their veſſels through the trackleſs deep;
While ſick'ning at their wizzard's rites impure,
She veils her face beneath the ſable cloud,
As all-portentous their own turbid North
Shoots ſanguine ſtreams, and horror rules the ſkies.

Ray. May each malignant demon they invoke
Inſtil diſcordant counſels in the minds
Of ſuch as ſeek their aid!—The luſt of gold
And thirſt of human blood urge on thoſe fiends,
'Till caught in their own wiles, they meet deſtruction.

Oſb. The flame of glory glows not in their breaſts;
That with humanity inſpires the brave:
Strangers alike to honour and our faith,
Onwards they preſs through violated leagues,
To blood and rapine—ſpurning ſolemn oaths,
Their faithleſs chiefs forge chains for all mankind:
Still we with them have plac'd our ſolemn vows
Upon the altar of a nation's faith:
Yet why ſhould we keep oaths inviolate

With

With miſcreants, by no ties of honour bound?
But, profiting by their example turn
Their poiſon'd inſtruments upon themſelves.

Ray. O! never, Oſbert, may ſuch foul diſhonour
Diſgrace the chriſtian cauſe. Juſtice immutable
Cannot be wreſted to man's ſelfiſh purpoſe,
But will avenge her violated name,
Though to our view her ſteps may tardy ſeem.
O! never may Britannia ſee her ſons
Baſely degenerate, ſwerve from honour's laws,
And offer up their impious prayers to Heaven
To aid injuſtice!——

Oſb. ——The full force, my lord,
Of your reproof I feel—you will excuſe
A wayward thought which now I find was wrong.

Ray. True magnanimity will ever thus
Acknowledge haſty error. Know, my Oſbert,
He who aſpires to honour's hallow'd fane
Can never by a dark and winding path
Conquer the ſteep aſcent: he who would gain
Unſtain'd her laurel, forward muſt preſs on,
Though toil retards and dangers riſe around.

Oſb. What toil can check us when led on by you?
With fierce delight we tread the paths of death,
Through fields of carnage ſnatch the crimſon'd laurel
And bind it round our brows.——

Ray. ——Yet mark me, Oſbert—
High as the awful mountain's giddy height
The temple of falſe glory rears its front,
But deſolation ſweeps around its baſe;

Yet the raſh judging world admiring views
The ſteely conqueror wade through ſeas of blood
To gain the envied ſummit, and adores
The hand that binds in chains a proſtrate world.

Oſh. Such are as ſtorms or peſtilential blaſts,
Dread executors of the wrath of Heaven,
Who lighted by the baleful torch of war
That gleams terrific on their burniſh'd arms,
Sweep their own ſemblance from the groaning earth.
—But the Hiſtoric Muſe, from age to age,
With ever-blooming ſweets ſhall ſtrew the tombs—
Their tombs, who liv'd not baſely for themſelves,
But periſh'd nobly in their Country's cauſe.

Ray. The mind that glows with ſentiments like theſe
Muſt be invincible, and equal meet
The ſmiles of fortune or her ſable frowns.
And now my armed friends, my more than brothers,
Whoſe hearts beat ardent for your Country's weal,
Let firmneſs, and obedience to command
Pervade our ranks and make ſucceſs our own.
Once more theſe aged limbs I'll caſe in ſteel,
Perchance to add freſh wounds to former ſcars.—
Forgive an old man's boaſt, whoſe ſword ne'er bluſh'd
With native blood, but ever has been drawn
For Loyalty, Religion, and our Laws.

Oſh. The ſons of Streanſhall, when call'd forth by you,
Know they are led to honour and to fame:
The tender ſtripling finds his Murrion light,
Nor feels it gall his brow, but longs to join

The embattled ranks, and try his unfleſh'd ſword;
The ſword he draws againſt the foes of man,

Pants for the hardy veteran's honeſt fame,
And bids a grateful Land record his name.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II.

A Hall in Mulgrave Caſtle.

Enter Lord MAULAY *and an* ATTENDANT.

MAULAY.

Who ſaw Sir Piers of Groſmont?——

Atten. ——Even now,
My gracious lord, he croſs'd the Barbican,
With haſty ſteps, towards the Caſtle gate.

Mau. Go bid the porter give him inſtant entrance.

[*Exit* Attendant.

When ſhall my ſoul have reſt?—this wayward boy,
The only hope of Maulay's ancient houſe,
Still thwarts thoſe views that center all in him,
And, with unbluſhing forehead, dares avow
A paſſion for the daughter of my foe.

[*Enter* Attendant.

Atten. My lord, Sir Piers of Groſmont.——

Mau. ——Bid him enter.

[*Enter* Sir Piers.

Welcome, Sir Piers. Is Leofric return'd?

Sir Piers. He has, my lord.——

Mau. ——Well, what are we to learn?
Has he fulfill'd his hazardous commiſſion?

Piers. I truſt, my lord, even to your utmoſt wiſh.
Eager deſire has given wings to duty.—
Clad in the habit of a wand'ring minſtrel,
With cautious ſteps he gain'd the banks of Tyne:
There from a ſon of rapine, heard the fate
Of hapleſs Lindisfarne!* Her ſilent walls
Proclaim the fury of thoſe ſons of Denmark,
Who, fated with deſtruction, left the iſle
To ſeek elſewhere for prey: but to what point
They bend their fatal courſe, ſeems wrapt in ſhade;
But popular opinion wafts them hither.

Mau. Well, let them come; they'll find our rugged coaſts
Arm'd at all points, to give them fatal welcome:
Not ſo, as in the days of ill-ſtar'd Oſbert,
When blood and conflagration mark'd their courſe,
And even the bulwarks of imperial York
Stoop'd to their baſe to give fierce Hunguar entrance;
Who brandiſhing on high the flaming torch,
Amidſt the ſhrieks of woe, with ſavage joy
Saw towers and temples wrapt in ſmoke and flame.
The Throne and Altar levell'd with the duſt,
While cruelty and horror ſtalk'd around!

Piers. 'Tis not for us, but thoſe in Streanſhall's walls,
To ſhrink with terror at their dire approach.
(Scornfully) Yet do her ſons deſpiſe the arms of ſteel,
And wield th' anathema's more potent thunder,
While

* Holy Iſland.

While we of ſuch reſources unprepar'd,
Muſt like mere mortals meet them front to front,
And try the fortune of the ſanguine field.
There ſhould we fail, the firm embattled towers
That grace the height of Mulgrave's frowning brow,
May bid defiance to the utmoſt power
Of hoſtile Scandinavia.——

Mau. ——Canſt thou think
That Maulay's warring ſpirit will await
Behind protecting walls, the ſhock of arms?
No—let us meet them in the open plain;
'Tis there to conquer, or 'tis there to die.
There—ſhould my ſon my breathleſs corſe behold,
Let him be told, that no ignoble paſſion
Diſgrac'd his ſire, or ſtain'd his martial fame.

Piers. By ſuch example fir'd, the youthful lord
Muſt doubtleſs add freſh honours to his name.

Mau. But how?—by oppoſition to my will?—
Does he not bend the knee to Raymond's daughter?
Raymond—the haughty rival of our houſe!
By Heaven! the offspring of my meaneſt vaſſal
Should find a dearer welcome in theſe arms,
Than ſhe who, tho' with wealth and honours crown'd,
Claim'd her deſcent from that deteſted line!

Piers. Were you, my lord, and Raymond, both obey'd
By thoſe who ought to know no will but yours,
This dreaded union never could have place;
For fame reports, that Raymond looks with ſcorn
On all alliance with the houſe of Maulay.

Mau.

Mau. Ha!—ſaidſt thou—look with ſcorn! now by the Rood,
And my brave anceſtors immortal ſpirits,
The blood of Maulay ne'er ſhall mix with his!
No—Maulay's heir ſhall ne'er confer his name,
(A name 'till now untarniſh'd,) on a branch
Of that unhallow'd ſtem.—What! look with ſcorn
On thoſe that ſoar above them!—Know, Sir Piers,
That not the lineage ev'n of royal Alfred,
Could think their honours in the leaſt diminiſh'd,
By an alliance with the houſe of Maulay.—
But when laſt ſaw you my degenerate ſon?

Piers. Not ſince laſt night, my lord: at early dawn
Lord Edgar left the caſtle for the chaſe.

Mau. By whom attended?——

Piers. ——By Edwyn and Old Albert.

Mau. Know you, Sir Piers, which way they bent their courſe?
'Twas not to Streanſhall?——

Piers. ——No—I heard the horn
Sound from the weſtward; or in Newton's brakes
Or Kilton foreſt, they arouſe their prey

Mau. Well, anywhere but in the woods of Streanſhall!—
Would I could place an everlaſting barrier
Between this caſtle and that hated abbey!——
But now another cauſe demands our cares;
A cauſe that calls for every heart and hand.—
(To Attendants.) Lead forth my courſer to the caſtle gate,

And

And bid my truſty guard prepare attendance.
Sir Piers, I need your preſence and advice,
To trace on yonder hill our future camp:
Should Denmark's ſons reviſit Ebor's ſhores,
Our troops ſhall form upon that verdant ſwell,
Where ſleep the aſhes of renowned Wade,—
There will we plant our ſtandard of defiance.

[*Exit.*

Piers. (ſolus.) Now feels once more my ſoul the gleams of hope,
While fierce diſſention rears her ſnaky creſt:
Now, Edgar, ſhalt thou meet a double bar
To check thy amorous purpoſe in its courſe.
Soon ſhall I be aveng'd for that foul day,
When, in the tournament by thee o'erthrown,
The fair Edwina ſaw me on the ground.
Think'ſt thou I can forgive it? No, by hell
Forgiveneſs ever was to me unknown!
Let ſofter boſoms give it entertainment;—
The gloomy ſoul of Groſmont owns it not:——
Then know, proud youth! an injury to him
Is deep engraven, with a point of ſteel,
Upon the marble tablet of his heart.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE III.

Without the Walls of Mulgrave Caſtle.—*Time, Afternoon.*

Enter EDGAR *and his Followers, with Boar Staves, Bows and Arrows, from the chaſe.*

Song by EDWYN, *and the reſt in Chorus.*

'HOW bright o'er the woodlands ariſes the morn,
'As we're rous'd to the chaſe, by the heart-cheering horn;
'See the ſtag break his covert and bound o'er the lawns,
'While echo repeats the ſure beagle's loud tones:
'Now the current he tries,
'To the uplands then flies,
'By the herd quite forſaken, he ſtretches forlorn;
'His laſt effort at bay,
'Now the hounds ſeize their prey,
'And his life he reſigns to the ſound of the horn.

Edgar. Hubert* has ſmil'd upon our toils to-day,
And favouring breezes ſent their gentle aid
To cheer the buxom chaſe. My raptur'd ear
Still tingles with the chiding of the hounds,
Whoſe harmony, repell'd by yonder rock,
Expanſive floated down the tortuous vale,
And ſent its leſſening echoes to the main.—
Where is Old Albert?——

Albert. ——Here, my gracious lord.

Edg. Thou venerable father of the chaſe,
Hadſt thou been abſent, not the blood-ſtain'd fur
Of the long dreaded wolf had grac'd our triumph:

He

* St. Hubert, the patron of ſportſmen.

He who ſo long has reign'd in Kilton's woods,
The ſubtle tyrant* of their fleecy folds.

Alb. You glad my heart and bring forth tears of joy,
My good young maſter, thus to pour your praiſe
On age's weak endeavours:—yet I've known
The day, when through the deep entangled wood,
I've follow'd with my ſpear, the foaming boar,
Nor turn'd from the purſuit until I'd ſeen
The brindled monſter proſtrate at my feet.

Edg. The ſhaggy trophies that adorn our hall,
Bear witneſs to the proweſs of thy youth,
And time hath ſtamp'd its value on thy deeds:
Thou art no braggart, Albert. Look, my friends,
Mark well the ſilver honours of his front,
Thoſe honours that give dignity to years,
A green old-age, like to his native oak.

Alb. Content, my lord, hath ſmooth'd the brow of age;
And ſince my faithful ſervice has been crown'd
With ſuch approving goodneſs—can I wiſh
For more on this ſide Heaven?—but my boy
Calls forth a parent's cares—he now is yours,—
I've taught him gratitude: and ſhould he fail
In duteous obſervance, he would bring
My hoary hairs with ſorrow to the grave.

Edg. No fear of that, good Albert! Edwyn's thine.
His blooming youth repays thy watchful cares,
And marks the parent-ſtock from whence he ſprung:
His boſom's warm, as warm as e'er was mine,
When in my early days it beat for thee. *Alb.*

---

* In the abbey records, we find a charge of 1s. 9d. for dreſſing 14 wolves' ſkins.

Alb. My deareſt lord, this goodneſs is too much,—
Theſe tears muſt thank you--tears that warm my heart.
Can you remember?—yes, you knew the day
When firſt I plac'd you on the back of *pigmy*,
The palfrey I had rear'd with ſo much care.
Who taught you firſt to preſs his ſleeky ſides,
And keep your ſeat with firmneſs?—'twas Old Albert!

Edg. It was, indeed!—thou pointed'ſt out the path
That led from boyiſh ſports to manly feats.
Firſt taught by thee to poiſe the glittering ſpear,
And in the chaſe of ſhaggy ſylvan foes,
To ſteel our ſinews for a nobler war.—
Now, the full-acorn'd boar may reſt ſecure
Beneath the foreſt's ſhade; the nervous arm
Muſt bend our ſtubborn yew to nobler purpoſe
Than ſylvan war affords. The well-aim'd dart
That often on the felon wolf aveng'd
His nightly ravage on our fleecy folds,
Muſt now be pointed on his human ſemblance,—
Thoſe fell inſatiate murderers of mankind,
That, cauſeleſs, have prepar'd to drench theſe plains
With their poſſeſſor's blood.——

Alb. ——But ours ſhall burn
With tenfold ardour, in the glorious chaſe
Of thoſe fell ſpoilers; who, in evil hour,
May meet their doom upon theſe very ſhores,
Long mark'd by them for vengeance.——

Edg. ——Thou ſpeakeſt well;
And fortune ſoon may call our valour forth:
For by an Argoſie from Denmark bound

To diſtant ſhores, but wreck'd upon our coaſt,
We learn, that ſoon they mean to pay with blood
The debt they owe us for their late defeat.

Alb. O! let them come, for fate hangs o'er their heads:
Our wolves anticipate their future feaſt,
And their own raven croaks their funeral knell.

Edg. Prophetic be thy words!—'Edwyn, come hi-'ther,
'After a ſlight repaſt, meet me again.
Albert, you will remain: and ſhould my father
Require my preſence, tell him I ſhall await
All his commands, before the hour of reſt.

Alb. I will, my lord. Heaven heal thoſe deadly feuds
That now prevail between our honour'd lords!
Then ſhould we look with ſcorn upon the Dane,
When union calls Britannia's ſons to arms.

Edg. O! fear not. Let but danger ſhew her front,
And diſcord ſhall to foreign ſhores retire;
In the dull times of peace, our reſtleſs ſpirits
Waſte their exuberant ſtrength in civil broils:

But when loud threaten'd by inveterate foes,
No party then the armed Patriot knows;
Domeſtic feuds like viſions diſappear,
And union bends the bow and points the ſpear;
The loyal band, confiding in its might,
One hand, one heart, moves tranquil to the fight;
And ev'n when plumed conqueſt crowns the field,
Bids the ſtain'd laurel to the olive yield;

Or, her juſt rights cemented by their blood,
They die with tranſport for their Country's good.

[*Exeunt.*

End of Act the Firſt.

ACT II. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Lord Raymond's *Palace, at Streanſhall.*

Enter EVERILDA *and* EDWINA.

EVERILDA.

HOW pleaſing is the ſtrain, when the wild harp
Wafts to the Throne of Grace its ſilver ſound,
And voices like the ſeraphim pour forth,
To him that gave them breath, the ſongs of praiſe!
But now, me thinks, eſtranged from the world,
I feel myſelf a ſiſter of the choir,
From whence the warring paſſions all are baniſh'd,
And bliſs angelic every boſom warms.

Edw. Secluſion was not form'd for minds like yours,
Who by example ſhould illume the world,
—That world, in which may Everilda feel
Each bleſſing that awaits on virtuous love.
O! how could you withdraw from Edgar's vows?
The firſt, the braveſt of Northumbria's ſons.

Eve. Were he *even* more than poet's pencil drew,
Yet fate has plac'd an everlaſting bar
Between our early views and future hopes;
And his ſtern ſire, the cauſeleſs foe of mine,
Forbids alliance with the houſe of Raymond:

Not

Not ſo with you—your more propitious ſtar
Shines bright on him; the object of your choice,
Sir Piers finds no obſtruction to his love.

Edw. Yes—ſuch as never can removal find;
One ſtronger far than adamantine bonds,—
Invincible averſion!——

Eve. ——Can it be?

Edw. Moſt ſurely!—and for ever ſhall remain.
Was he not Groſmont's brother?—hapleſs youth!
Whoſe riſing virtues, like the opening bloſſoms
That deck the face of ſpring, by the keen blaſt
Of ſweeping northern winds, were bent to earth.

Eve. Heaven knows, with many an unavailing tear
I've mourn'd his loſs! he was endear'd to all.—

Edw. Moſt juſtly ſo: imagination forms
In my ſad mind, the likeneſs of two brothers;
One, on whoſe manly and unveiled front,
Open as day, beam'd forth the ardent ſoul,
Careleſs of praiſe, yet conſcious of deſert:
The other, with cold caution moving in
The marked line of duty, yet, with care
Watching each eye obſervant of his ſteps.—
No more of him—'tis irkſome to my ſoul.

Eve. His name from me ſhall never more offend you;
For, truſt me, had your heart ne'er known the power
Of mutual love, Sir Piers is not the knight
Should have my wiſhes for Edwina's hand:
But yet his warm attempts to reconcile
The feuds which part my father and Lord Maulay,
Claim all my gratitude.——

Edw. ——May they deſerve it! For

For ſtill I ſcarce know why—doubt hangs on hope,
And clouds bedim the ſlowly beaming proſpect.

Eve. O! think not ſo—tho' you Sir Piers diſdain,
And ſcorn the tender of his offer'd love,
Yet ſtill his gentle offices demand
My warmeſt thanks—but more I need not ſay.

Edw. It is enough. On earth may you enjoy
The higheſt bleſſings of connubial love,
To life's remoteſt period!—but for me—
Long have my morning proſpects ſunk in night,
And fled with Groſmont's ſpirit to the ſkies!

Eve. Soon may thoſe ſkies reſtore to my Edwina
Internal peace!—but come, my penſive couſin,
The ſolemn bell calls forth the virgin choir
To meet at veſpers: there we both will ſeek
Such aid as Heaven with gracious hand beſtows. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Without the Walls of Streanſhall Abbey.

Time, Evening—the Moon riſing.

Enter EDGAR, *and* EDWYN *his Page at a diſtance.*

EDGAR.

How balmy ſweet the hour of dewy eve,
When Nature and her children ſeek repoſe!
The glowing orb of day has left the ſkies,
And ceaſes now to gild with parting beam
The awful heights of Huntley's frowning cape,
But hides its glories in the northern main.
No cloud obſcures the azure vault of Heaven,

To

To dim the ſplendours of its radiant train,—
Peace rules o'er all, but in the ſick'ning heart
Of diſappointed love. O, Everilda!
For whom alone I live—art thou then doom'd
To bleſs another's arms?—Diſtracting thought!
It points the way to madneſs—let it periſh!—
'Tis blaſphemy againſt the radiant truth
Of Heaven's own image—in her ſpotleſs mind
Deceit can never dwell!——Where art thou, Edwyn?

Edwyn. My gracious lord, attendant on your will.

Edg. What ſound was that?——

Edw. ——I nothing hear, my lord,
But the wild daſhing of the diſtant wave.

Edg. 'Twas no ſuch ſound; it was the veſper bell,
In lengthening echoes from the ſolemn tower:
How wearily to me drag on the hours!—
Again methinks it ſtrikes upon the ear!

Edw. Surely, my lord, the veſper hour is gone;
Even now, a monk has croſs'd the winding path
That leads to yonder village, from the abbey.

Edg. No, all is ſtill,—it was a fancied noiſe.
'Tis near the wonted time in which my love
Enjoy'd the fragrance of the evening breeze,
In happier days, ere diſcord ſhed its blight
Upon the faireſt bloſſoms of our hopes.
Obſerv'ſt thou, Edwyn, yonder lonely copſe
That ſhades the weſtern dell?——

Edw. ——I do, my lord.

Edg. Propitious ſhades! to me for ever dear,—
There often have our vows been interchang'd;

While

While the gay warblers on the pendant boughs,
Seem'd emulous to ſtrain their little throats,
And add their harmony to ours below.

Edw. You are ſad, my lord: the deep'ning ſhades around
Depreſs the penſive mind. Perhaps a ſtrain
Of gentle cadence might beguile the time?

Edg. For thy intention, thanks, my gentle Edwyn;
But now my mind would do thy ſtrains injuſtice.

Edw. When, wearied with the falcon's ardent chaſe,
The gay companions of your noble ſport
Have clos'd the day beneath Lord Maulay's roof,
Your Edwyn's harp hath cheer'd the blazing hall,
And warm applauſes tingled through my veins:
Permit me now to ſooth my maſter's mind?

Edg. Well, be it ſo—but let thy notes be ſuch
As ſuit the dying falls of hopeleſs love;
My ſoul reſponſive then may join the ſounds:
For why ſhould muſic, for the ſons of joy,
Attune to revelry her ſilver ſtrings?
But rather give the ſoftly whiſper'd air,
That pours a lenient balſam on the heart,
Rais'd or depreſs'd, in turns, by hope and fear.

SONG BY EDWYN.

SHIELD.

I.

SWEET ſleeps the moon, upon the ſpires,
That grace fair Streanſhall's height;
While the brown cliffs, in deepeſt ſhade,
Contraſt her ſilver light.

II.

II.

Rous'd from repoſe, the fiſher chill,
Prepares his netted ſtore,
As, with amuſive ſound, the ſurge
Dies murmuring on the ſhore:

III.

Impell'd by hope, with plaintive line,
He ſooths the midnight wave;
The feathering oars reſponſive join,
And ſparkle, as they lave.

IV.

Bleſs'd hope! O may thy cheering ray,
Diſpel foul diſcord's gloom;
And ſoften'd parents point the way,
To Hymen's ſacred dome.

EDGAR *(haſtily)*.

Ceaſe, Edwyn! ceaſe thy ſtrain—look to the turret
Below the orchard-poſtern—ſee the moon
Throw her pale light upon two female forms,
That ſeem this way to glide—my beating heart
Informs me, one muſt be my Everilda!
Let us retire behind the thickeſt ſhade. [*Retire.*

Enter EVERILDA *and* EDWINA.

EVERILDA.

Day quits the ſkies—how pleaſing is the gloom
Of dewy twilight to the penſive mind!
Either the ſacred notes from yonder choir
Still vibrate on my heart, or 'twas the ſound
Of rural melody; now ſeldom heard,
Since our young ſhepherds chang'd the ruſtic pipe
For the loud clarion's war-inſpiring voice.

Edwina.

Edwina. It was no ſolemn ſtrain that ſeeks the ſkies,
Nor that which animates the warrior's breaſt:
It ſeem'd more gentle than the paſſing breeze,
That hardly bends the cowſlip's dewy head,
And wafts its fragrance to the bowers of bliſs.

Eve. Such notes have been no ſtrangers to my ear;
When duty ſanction'd love, beneath theſe ſhades
Sweet has the minſtrel ſtruck his trembling ſtrings,
When Edgar's vows their harmony combin'd
To bleſs the future proſpects of my life:
But now—the ſable curtain of deſpair
Cloſes the once lov'd ſcene!——

EDGAR, *(diſcovering himſelf.)*

——O, never, never!
The vows of virtuous love are mark'd in Heaven,
By forms angelic—ſuch as Everilda!

Eve. (ſtarting.) Ah! whence art thou?—Edgar—
was this well done,
Thus to intrude upon the ſecret hour
Of lonely meditation, and to note
The vague effuſions of a wandering mind?

Edg. Forgive me—O, forgive me!—
Nay, frown not, Everilda! nor recal
Thoſe ſweet expreſſions that revive the hopes
Of future bliſs within this faithful breaſt,
That beats with gratitude to love and thee.

Eve. Wound not my ear with ſpeeches ſo ill-tim'd:
This is no hour nor place for ſuch profeſſions.
Even now I quitted yonder ſacred pile,
To ſeek, in contemplation, mental peace.

Edg.

Edg. Think not I come preſumptuous to intrude
Upon your ſilent hour—no, Everilda!
I'd ſooner die, than give you juſt offence,
Though now enjoin'd, by undeſerved doom,
No more to paſs within theſe hallow'd gates.
Can you then blame me, if, to ſooth deſpair,
(As late departed ſpirits hover round
The ſcenes which once they lov'd,) I linger ſtill
Around theſe walls, encircling all my hopes?

Eve. Edgar, forbear! You know too well the bar
That fate invincible has plac'd between us.
To duty bending, think of me no more!
Among Northumbria's dames a partner ſeek,
Such as your ſire may with his ſanction crown.

Edg. O, never, never! When injuſtice ſeeks
To caſt her fetters round the free-born mind,
No duty can oblige us to ſubmit.

Eve. Speak not thus wantonly of filial ties;
Nor let ungovern'd paſſion or ſelf-love,
Teach thee to ſcorn the high beheſt of Heaven:
If that ſhould be rejected, how ſuſtain
The curſe that waits on ſtubborn diſobedience,
Juſtly deny'd the bleſſings of our ſires?
O, my heart ſickens at the dreadful thought!

Edg. It cannot be! Humanity revolts,
And mercy ſhudders. Why ſhould ſtern revenge
Make us its ſacrifice? Have we not trod
The flowery paths of innocence together,
When ſmiling parents mark'd our thoughtleſs ſteps?
Can you remember when, in early youth,

I bore the linnet from its parent neſt,
And gave the little captive to your boſom?
A tear reprov'd me—and a gentle glance
Shot thro' my kindling ſoul the beams of mercy—
That mercy which prepar'd a ſeat for love.
O, Everilda! muſt I plead in vain?
Let me not fall the victim of deſpair.

Eve. Why, Edgar, wilt thou thus diſturb thy ſoul,
—Give keener tortures to my wounded heart?

Edg. O, no—your peace is dearer than my own:
But yet permit me to recal thoſe times,
When in the groves of Eſke we careleſs rov'd.
The cowſlip, harebell, and the varied ſweets
Which Nature in her bounty caſts around,
Form'd the rude chaplet for my fair-one's hair;
You ſuffer'd me to place it, with a ſmile:
Ah! little did I think, beneath that ſmile,
Love had prepard his pleaſures and his pangs.

Eve. How unavailing, Edgar, this diſcourſe!
Know, there are other bonds than thoſe of love.

Edg. What bonds can meet the ſanction of the ſkies,
That throw reſtraint upon the nobleſt paſſions?
For he who truly loves, views all mankind
With ſoften'd heart, and gladdens as they ſmile.
O, ſweet Edwina! deign to plead my cauſe:
I aſk no common boon—I aſk for life,
—That life which dwells in Everilda's ſmiles.

Edwina. If all a ſeraph's eloquence were mine,
And ſoft perſuaſion dwelt upon my tongue,
Believe me, Edgar, all its force ſhould bend

To heal thoſe deadly feuds that virtue mourns,
And give to conſtant love its due reward.

Edg. The burning tear, that ſpeaks before my tongue,
Muſt aid the feeble language of my heart:
O, had my wiſhes but prevailing power,
To give Edwina all her ſoul deſires!

Edw. Oppreſs me not with thanks.—Dear Everilda!
Can you refuſe to bend a gentle ear
To Edgar's vows?—who for yourſelf adores you—
Not as the heireſs of the potent Raymond.

Eve. I do believe it—did not interdiction
(Not that which wraps its ſtern commands in frowns,)
But from a father's mild perſuaſive lips,
In gentle notes recals the wandering mind:
Should I reſiſt it? And, though full conſent
Did come unforc'd from my indulgent ſire,
Could I ſubmit to enter Maulay's manſion
A moſt unwelcome gueſt? No—Raymond's daughter
Could never bend her mind to ſuch diſgrace!

Edg. Diſgrace!--a royal manſion would be honour'd
By Everilda's preſence—think not thus.—
Did not this fatal diſcord part our ſires,
Lord Maulay's heart would do you ample juſtice;
For when diveſted of thoſe turbid paſſions,
My father is the nobleſt of mankind.

Eve. Then why offend him?——

Edg. ——I revere him truly;
But could I tear this paſſion from my heart,
I ſhould be moſt unworthy of his name.
O, Everilda! hear my ardent prayer,

And you, Edwina! ſtrengthen my requeſt.
I may offend you—yet—my fault'ring tongue
Muſt ſpeak the wiſhes of a beating heart.
Eve. What canſt thou mean?--I tremble at thy ſpeech--
Edg. Yet hear me not in wrath, nor bend your eyes
So ſternly on me.—Since then our hoſtile fires
Forbid our union, let us fly from hence,
And at the Park of Julius* ſeek content
Far from theſe threaten'd ſhores—a reverend friend
Can there the knot indiſſoluble form
That ſhall unite our hearts.——
Eve. ——And this from thee!
Canſt thou ſo ſoon forget thy noble lineage,
Thy anceſtors, in arts, in arms renown'd,
Proud of the trophies by their valour won?
O, think how they would bluſh, to ſee a ſon
Of Mulgrave's antient houſe forſake the paths
That lead to glory, for a ſelfiſh pleaſure!
At this eventful time too!—when our foes
Come arm'd in terrors, and whoſe fatal ſteps
Are mark'd by horrors baffling all deſcription!
I know my ſex's weakneſs,—yet I'd ſcorn
A Prince, who could ſo far forget his duty
—To quit a father in the hour of peril,
And barter honour for inglorious love!
Edg. Think not ſo hardly of me. Guthred's ſword
Is not ſo keen as Everilda's ſcorn.
Sunk in your eſtimation,---what is life?—
Not worth the holding!——Boaſting I diſdain;
Yet never ſhall diſhonour taint my name; For

* Now called July Park.

For you I conquer, or for you I die:
And, could I think that *even* one parting tear
Could drop its balm upon this fainting form,
My parting ſpirit would be truly bleſt.

Eve. O ſeek not thus to move me!—thou haſt ſtill
My beſt eſteem.——

Edg. ——Eſteem!—Heav'ns! what is that?—
How chill it ſtrikes my heart?---from whence this change!
How often have I wiſh'd, that free from pomp,
The humble cottage roof had made us bleſs'd,
And all the ruſtic ſweets of life we'd ſhar'd,
In mutual joy, in ſweet participation;
Smile, meeting ſmile!—and ev'n in grief to join:
When ſickneſs caſt its gloomy damps around,
With wakeful zeal I'd watch the couch of langour,
And make this arm a pillow for thy head.
Nay, ſpeak! nor let deſpair with leaden hand
Weigh down the eye-lids of expiring hope!

Eve. No more!—my duty to the beſt of fathers
Bids me diſcourage all that gives him pain:
But, Edgar, hear me,—Never did my heart
Incline to any vows, but thoſe from thee.
Though virgin modeſty ſhould chain my tongue,
Yet let aſſurance tell thee,—that this hand
Deny'd to thee, ſhall never be another's.

Edg. My Everilda! ſure an angel's notes
Dwell on thy tongue and raiſe the ſoul to Heaven.
And am I then thought worthy of the bliſs,
The dear delight of calling you my own?—

Eve. It may be ſo, but let not hope beguile us,-- Our

Our parents yet are foes. We now muſt part.

Edg. Permit me to attend you to the gate?

Eve. Not ſo—no further—we may be obſerv'd:
Me thought Lupino paſs'd through yonder thicket.

Edwina. I know not why, but all our ſteps are mark'd
—I like not that Lupino; as the ſerpent,
He glides ſcarce ſeen, and much I fear his fangs.

Eve. O, fear him not!—in innocence ſecure,
We know no danger. Edgar!—now—farewel!

[*Exit* Everilda *and* Edwina.

Edg. May every bleſſing fall on Everilda!
Farewel! thou treaſure of my heart,—farewel!
Now doth my ſpirit ſoar above the earth,—
I'm bid to cheriſh hope—and hear my fair
Own, that her Edgar's love may meet return;
And ſuch return as none but thoſe can feel,
Who know the pangs and trembling hopes of love,—
Love, by whoſe power, the nobleſt paſſions riſe,
That bear the ardent ſpirit to the ſkies. [*Exit.*

End of Act the Second.

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Hall in Mulgrave Caſtle.

Enter Edgar.

SWEET and refreſhing is the breath of morn;
And beauteous is the roſe-bud, as it bends
Beneath the morning's dew: the zephyr's breath
Calls forth its infant ſweets; but, when full blown,

It

It gives its boſom to the gariſh ſun ;
Like beauty view'd at will, it charms no more.
Not ſo, my Everilda ! Though by grace
Her ſteps are mark'd, yet ſtill her beauteous form
Shrinks from the noontide gaze, and with quick glance
From the obſervant eye withdraws her charms.

Enter ALBERT.

Alb. Health to my lord ! How lik'd you laſt day's chaſe ?

Edg. The ſport was good ; although I do not feel
My former wonted ardour, ſtill it ſerves
To haſten on the lagging ſteps of time.
When ſaw you laſt my father ?——

Alb.——He walk'd forth
At ſun-riſe ; but ere this muſt be return'd.

Edg Know you, if he laſt night enquir'd for me ?

Alb. Moſt anxiouſly !—he ſaid he had your promiſe
To meet him long before the hour of reſt.

Edg. I was to blame—I noted not the hour,
But when returning, was ſurpris'd to hear,
Entering the gate, the turret's bell beat one.

Alb. He was afraid you had repair'd to Streanſhall.

Edg. O, why afraid ?—Can Raymond's honour'd name
Seek for addition in the houſe of Maulay ?

Alb. Would they were join'd !—yet ſome malignant power
That veils its head in darkneſs, checks the courſe
Of ſoft'ning rancour and returning friendſhip.
Have you not too incautiouſly, my lord,

Open'd

Open'd your heart to ſome low ſycophant,
Who with baſe perfidy repays your truſt?

Edg. Such may exiſt, but yet I know him not.
'Tis true, I have for ſervices perform'd,
Met ill requital; and I've known a friend
Repay kind offices with cold neglect.

Alb. Worſe may you never know! and not like me,
Feel the deep ſting of a pretended friend.
Ingratitude, with ſharp and rankling tooth,
Inflicts a wound that time alone can heal:
But the moſt pleaſing, though the deadlieſt, poiſon,
Is that which feigned friendſhip ſmiling pours
Into the cup of life: a cherub's form
In gay proſperity, it ever wears;
But when adverſity's dark clouds ariſe,
The viſor falls and falſhood ſtands confeſs'd.

Edg. Perfection's not the lot of human kind.
Yet never let our hearts harſh judgment form,
And for few baſe examples ſcorn mankind.

Alb. I know your ſoul diſdains the narrow thought.
—But yonder comes your father;—I'll retire.
No good I bode from his contracted brows.

[*Exit* Albert.

Enter Maulay.

Mau. Who was he, Edgar, that went hence juſt now?

Edg. My lord, it was Old Albert.——

Mau. ——He, it ſeems,
Has now your private ear. Can you not find
A man more honourable to confide in?

Edg. My lord, Old Albert is an humble friend,

And

And with obſervance duteous bends to you ;
He loves me as your ſon, not for myſelf.

Mau. Well ! be it ſo ; enough of him.—You promis'd
Laſt night to meet me, ere the hour of reſt,
And yet you came not. What have you to anſwer ?

Edg. Few are my words, but ſuch as plead my pardon :
The night was tranquil, and the cloudleſs moon
Betray'd my ſteps beyond the foreſt's bounds.

Mau. Then what direction took you—not to Streanſhall ?

Edg. My ſteps I hardly noted, as the night
Diſpos'd my mind to pleaſing contemplation.

Mau. Why this evaſion ?—when too well I ſee
Your heart and courſe were both directed thither.

Edg. My lord, I am forbid to enter Streanſhall.

Mau. (haſtily.) Forbid by Raymond ?——

Edg. ——No, my lord, by you.

Mau. Well! do I know how far to find obedience ?
Then ſaw you not Old Raymond, nor his daughter ?

Edg. My lord, I ſaw not Raymond.——

Mau. ——'Tis enough !
Think'ſt thou thy ſubtle ſpeeches can deceive me ?
By all the ſaints, thou went'ſt to meet his daughter—
The daughter of thy father's direſt foe !
Of all the pangs that angry Heaven inflicts,
None ſtrike the heart with ſuch envenom'd point
As diſobedience in a favour'd child !

Edg. O, my good lord ! look on me as your ſon—

My life I'd ſacrifice for your repoſe:
For that, I try in vain to ſtem the tide
Of virtuous paſſion, once approv'd by you.

Mau. I ſee with ſorrow a degenerate ſon,
The future guardian of his houſe's honour,
Seek an alliance with its foe profeſs'd,
Child of my blood, but alien to my mind!

Edg. O ſay not ſo! I ever have been bound
In duty's cloſeſt ties:—caſt back, my lord,
Your eyes upon my grandſire's honour'd ſhade—
Did *he* for *you* thoſe ſordid bonds prepare,
That ſeek to fetter thus the generous mind?

Mau. I never his authority call'd forth
By obſtinate reſiſtance, but his will
I ever made my own.——

Edg. ——How bleſt were you!
And happineſs was widely ſcatter'd round:
Then ill-defined rights were not the cauſe
Of cruel diſcords, now diffus'd ſo wide.

Mau. When with my anceſtors, theſe weary bones
Are laid in peace beneath the marble tomb,
I grieve to think my Edgar ſhould diſtain
The glowing honours of our ancient houſe.

Edg. I never gave my father, by my choice,
Juſt cauſe to call me recreant to his hopes:
I thought to raiſe our houſe—not to depreſs it.
You once, my lord, did Everilda juſtice,
And prais'd in glowing terms her beauteous form;
Yet own'd it ſtill inferior to her mind.

Mau. Enough of this!—ſuch weakneſs caſt aſide:

Let

Let prudence gain a ſeat within your heart,
Then will you bluſh at theſe romantic paſſions.

Edg. Far be from me this ſtern philoſophy,
So chill and comfortleſs, that ſheds its ſnows
Upon the beſt affections of the heart,
And blaſts the fruit of every ripening virtue,—
The love of Country—and the ardent bliſs
That ſheds its roſes on domeſtic joys:
To dry the tear on ſad misfortune's cheek—
Bid comfort beam upon the furrow'd front
Her frozen boſom knows not—nor the glow
That bears humanity above the ſkies.
Virtue can never dwell in hearts of marble;
Grac'd with exterior form, but cold and dull
As the unfeeling ſtatue.——

Mau. ——Theſe romantic viſions
Suit well the ſons of indolence and peace,
But ill accord with thoſe who muſt diſpute,
Encas'd in mail, poſſeſſion of theſe lands,
Now loudly threaten'd by a foreign foe.

Edg. No foe I fear—their firm embattled line
Is not ſo dreadful as a father's anger.
Let me beſeech you, thus upon my knee,
To crave the leading forward of our vanguard.

Mau. Command to thee!—more fit to preſs the ruſhes
In wanton meaſures to the cittern's ſound:
He who would ſhine in war, muſt bid adieu
To thoſe delights—below a ſoldier's heeding.

Edg. O, rather plant your poignard in my boſom,

Than wound my honour with ſuch poignant words!
Crown but my wiſh—and in the field, I truſt,
By deeds, not words, to prove myſelf your ſon.

Mau. (after a pauſe.) Then take thy wiſh—and victory attend it.

Edg. I thank you from my ſoul! for it was you
That rais'd the martial ſpirit in my breaſt.
When arms and valour form'd the grateful theme,
My heart in ſilence dwelt upon your tongue;
With rapture heard the tales of ancient times,
When our brave anceſtors, with native valour,
Repell'd the fierce attacks of haughty Rome;
Whoſe laurel'd chieftains with amazement ſaw
The naked Britons brave her armed legions.
And ſhall the ſons of thoſe, whoſe untaught deeds
Claim'd honour from the conquerors of the world,
Stoop, tamely ſtoop to aſk precarious peace
From faithleſs infidels?—Forbid it Heaven!

Mau. To that a Briton never will ſubmit;
But rather leave his corſe upon the field,
To witneſs for him that he dy'd with honour.

Edg. Moſt true. But how ſhall I direct our march?
The Daniſh fleet is ſeen, from Ravenhill,
To bend its courſe to Streanſhall.——

Mau. ——Well! I ſee
Thy mind enchained to that fatal ſpot.
Let Raymond call his armed vaſſals forth
To meet the foe: it is enough for us
To guard theſe coaſts and Mulgrave's wide domains.

Edg. I ſpeak for general good.—You would not wiſh

To

To ſee Lord Raymond ſink beneath their force?
Altars o'erthrown and holy ſhrines prophan'd?
Nor leave the unreſiſting lambs within
A prey to thoſe blood-thirſty Daniſh wolves?

Mau. Nor do I mean it—but firſt guard our own.

Edg. O! my good lord, caſt back your tearful eye
On Coldingham, whoſe ruins, ſteep'd in gore,
Send up a glowing column to the ſkies,
And call for all their vengeance. Ah! ev'n now
Me thinks the forms of thoſe heroic maids,
Who ſought in death a ſafeguard to their honour,
And bade defiance to the blood-ſtain'd foe,
Smile on our hoſts and ſanction juſt revenge.

Mau. Well—take the vanguard—and conduct it ſo
As beſt may anſwer for the general weal:
But let our guard in Marſdale* ſtill remain,
And thoſe upon the watch tower, 'till we know
Where the dark louring ſtorm will point its ſtrength:
Meanwhile I go to form a ſtronger force
That may yield aid, or follow up your blow.
My bleſſing on your ſword!—and now, farewel!

[*Exit* Maulay.

Edg. Farewel! my honour'd ſire. Now mounts my ſoul
On eagle's wings, that bear me from the earth!
No longer am I a poor abject wretch
Without command! No longer rank'd with thoſe
Who

* Marſdale, near Sandſend; where, in the memory of man, were ſeen the remains of a Roman Altar, ſuppoſed to be dedicated to the god Mars.

Who ſlide along unnotic'd to the grave,
And hide diſhonour in the ſhades of death!

Our cauſe the coldeſt of all boſoms warms,
And childhood rouſes at the clang of arms.
For all that man holds dear we brave the field;
For beauty too the glittering falchion wield;
While tenfold ardour warms the warrior's breaſt,
As with her myrtle ſhe adorns his creſt,
Longs on the foe his energy to prove,
Led on by glory and inſpir'd by love.

[*Exit* Edgar.

SCENE II.

A vale without the Walls of Streanſhall Abbey.

Enter Sir Piers *of* Groſmont.

Sir Piers.

When Nature form'd her works, ſhe ſow'd the germs
Ev'n of her own deſtruction, and ambition
Prepares her ſtings for thoſe who own her power:
Bland as the ſmiles of ever-cheering hope,
The pangful traveller ſhe beckons on
To the exalted object of his view,
Which, ever and anon, he fondly thinks
Within his eager graſp; but, once attain'd,
Inſtead of down he finds a thorny pillow,
And learns, too late, that virtue gives repoſe
To hurtleſs innocence on beds of ſtraw.
Why, Virtue! did I quit thy tranquil paths?
'Tis true I'm Lord of Groſmont!—Ah! but how?—

Awaken'd

Awaken'd conſcience ſternly lays before me
A fatal ſcroll—in characters of blood,—
A brother's blood!—ſad agoniſing thought!
Which all the tears of my remaining life,
Though ſpent in actions of ſevereſt penance,
Can never waſh away.——I'll think no more—
No more anticipate the dreadful hour
When mercy muſt give place to ſtern-ey'd juſtice,—
What's won ſhall be enjoy'd. But ſoft—the ſun
Glances obliquely on the weſtern tower,
And marks the time I fix'd to meet Lupino,
That vile, deteſted agent of ambition,
Whoſe ſight my ſpirit holds in deep abhorrence:
And yet why ſhould I, ſince this tool of wealth
Like me is ſteep'd in guilt——but lo! he comes.

Enter LUPINO.

Lup. Hail to the Lord of Groſmont's wide domains!
Your ſlave ſtill waits attendant on your will.

Piers. No ſlave, Lupino, but the friend of Groſmont.
Yet how am I the lord of theſe domains,
Since I am kept in chains of ſordid vaſſalage,
Unjuſtly forg'd by Mulgrave's haughty lord?

Lup. What you call chains, your anceſtors have borne
Without complaint. O, had it been my fate
To bear *your* honours under bonds ſo light,
I might have run my courſe without a crime,
Nor ſhrunk with horror from life's cloſing ſcene.

Piers. Peace! let no more thoſe gloomy thoughts obtrude;
But look with cheerfulneſs on joys to come.

Lup.

Lup. To my torn boſom peace can never come!
An outcaſt from the world—foe to its laws—
I've been the hated inſtrument of vengeance,
And gain'd a ſcanty ſuſtenance by blood!

Piers. Why doſt thou bend on me thy haggard looks?
Thou waſt no novice when I knew thee firſt.

Lup. Ah! 'tis too true. *(Aſide.)* But, haughty ſir! remember—
Now full poſſeſſion gratifies your ſoul
And Groſmont's ſmiling vallies own you lord—
Remember who it was that made them yours?
'Twas he, who hazarded his future hopes
And brav'd the anger of avenging Heaven:
Your murther'd brother was no foe of mine.—
For *you* I ſtruck the blow that gave you power,
But plung'd me deeper in the gulph of guilt.

Piers. O ceaſe, thou fiend, to agoniſe my heart!
Art thou the miniſter of rigid juſtice,
Or Groſmont's friend? Where ſeekeſt thou reward?
From Heaven? ah, no!—then look for it from me.

Lup. With tardy ſteps your bounty ever came.
You plac'd me here about Lord Raymond's perſon,
To watch the ſteps of his fair niece Edwina:
Such offices muſt mark me ſtill your ſlave—
The ſlave of dire neceſſity:—for know,
—But render'd ſavage by a frowning world,
I ne'er had ſold my hands to deeds of death.

Piers. Let hell alone hear theſe diſcordant ſounds!
Why plant theſe daggers in thy ſoul and mine?
Should'ſt ſtill that thing call'd conſcience, haunt thy mind,

Seek out a prieſt—let him not want for gold,
He'll bid that reſtleſs monitor be ſtill.

Lup. Too well you know ſuch ſearch would be in vain,
For lenity ne'er ſmiles within theſe walls:
Not ſo, as in my own Calabria;
Where due indulgence waits on boiling paſſions,
That bear the frenzied ſoul to deſperate deeds:
Her ſons are never taught to check their ardour,
But, like the turbid boſoms of their mountains,
Amidſt a ſable cloud ſhoot forth their fires:—
Here, placid virtue is with juſtice join'd:
Had I ſought comfort from this rigid abbot,
Ere this, my fetter'd bones had bleach'd on high,
A ſpectacle of ſcorn for Albion's ſons:
For here, not even can all-potent gold
Procure remiſſion—blood muſt anſwer blood!

Piers. Curſe on thoſe hypocrites! who deck with ſweets
Their road thro' life, while we muſt tread the paths
Of thorny barrenneſs mark'd out by them.

Lup. That path, Sir Piers, was never trod by you.
Then why arraign thoſe guides without juſt cauſe?

Piers. I've cauſe too much! and though it grates my ſoul,
I'll give it to my tongue. Know then, Lupino,
On each Aſcenſion-day, the bluſhing ſun
Beholds the foul diſhonour of our houſe
Doom'd to diſgrace by an imperious abbot:
And all for what? Becauſe my grandſire's ardour

(The ſhaggy ſpoils witheld in chaſe he won,)
Shorten'd the penance of a dreaming hermit,
Who for himſelf exiſted, not mankind.
On that deteſted day, th' ignoble horn
Ne'er ſtrikes my wounded ear, but I could view
This towering abbey ſtooping to its baſe,
Cruſhing the miniſt'ring tribe beneath its ruins.

Lup. Even this to me ſeems light: a yearly penance,*
Compaſs'd within the hour, and hardly noted—
Is this the worſt?——

Piers. ——Thy heart is callous.

Lup. No—but the wretch that groans upon the rack
Feels little for imaginary ills.

Piers. Once more I go to try perſuaſion's force
(Though I deſpair already,) with Edwina:
There ſhould I fail—Have thoſe our agents orders?

Lup. They and their horſes are where you appointed.

Piers. 'Tis meet we part; ſuſpicion's glancing eye
May note our conference—wait me near the orchard.

[*Exit* Lupino.

Whoſe head's encircled by a glorious diadem,
(The golden prize ſecure,) can caſt aſide
The inſtruments by which it was obtain'd,
And leave them to the world's contempt and ſcorn?
Or ſhould they murmur, by worſe hands than theirs,
Bid an eternal ſilence ſeal their lips:
But I, entangled in the ſnares of guilt,
Muſt ſooth the baſe accomplice of my crimes,
And to his ſilence even owe exiſtence. O!

---

* This penance, or ſervice, is ſtill annually performed at Whitby.

O! life of miſery, protracted woe,
Such as the fiends muſt feel in ſhades below. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Hall in Lord Raymond's *Palace at Streanſhall.*

Enter OSBERT *and* ANSELM.

OSBERT.

Your charity, Lord Abbot, bids you think
Too highly of mankind. I wiſh Sir Piers
May be what you believe, and I deceived.
Yet why thoſe frequent meetings with Lupino?
'Tis true he brought him news of Groſmont's death;
The ſword his brother wore—the bracelet too
That love bound round his arm: theſe may endear him.
But ſee he comes.——

Enter SIR PIERS.

Piers. ——Oſbert, my friend, good day.
My lord, I crave your bleſſing?——

Anſ. ——Deſerve it, and 'tis yours. [*Exit* Anſelm.

Oſb. Sir Piers, we ſpoke even now
Of this lamented enmity that parts
Lord Raymond's from the noble houſe of Maulay.
Theſe feuds had been extinct for want of fuel;
But ſome malignant demon lurks behind,
And pours in oil upon the dying flame.

Piers. I truſt ſuch beings are unknown to us.

Oſb. In every lordly manſion they are found.
The bounteous earth, that gives us fruits and corn,
Produces hemlock and the deadly nightſhade:

And

And 'tis the lot of greatneſs to be ſerv'd
By artful ſycophants, who watch each glance,
And ſtudy to convert their patron's qualities
To their own proper uſe—to penetrate,
Beneath the likeneſs of devoted love,
Into the deep receſſes of his ſoul:
Artful to bend beneath the ſtorm of paſſion,
Or point its fury on the heads of thoſe
Their ſecret arts had long prepar'd for vengeance.

Piers. Am I ſuſpected? *(Aſide.)* Oſbert, you ſpeak darkly.

Oſb. Lord Maulay, with a ſoul beneficent
As ſummer's ſuns, that ſhine thro' foſtering ſhowers,
Is toſt by paſſions that outſtrip the force
Of ſweeping wint'ry blaſts; but ſpent their ſtrength,
With ſoften'd eye he views the baleful marks,
And caſts a ſigh upon the wrack behind.
I am not us'd to ſpeak ſo.—See, Lord Raymond.

Enter Raymond.

Ray. Welcome, Sir Piers!—Oſbert, our foes approach,
And ſeem to bend their courſe towards the bay
That's ſhelter'd by the rocks of Ravenhill.
Moſt likely there they will attempt a landing.
Send our young troops my orders not to ſtir
From their entrenchments, prudence muſt reſtrain them.

Oſb. Your orders ſhall moſt ſtrictly be obey'd.

[*Exit* Oſbert.

Ray. Well, good Sir Piers, what anſwer to my claim?

Piers.

Piers. A ſtern denial on the part of Maulay,
Expreſs'd in terms too groſs for me to utter.

Ray. Well! let it paſs—this is no time for diſcord.

Piers. My lord, might I but ſee your niece Edwina?

Ray. You have my leave.——

Piers. ——But yet I wiſh for more.—

Ray. What more? You have my leave; the reſt's her own.

Piers. Yet a few words from lips ſo much rever'd—

Ray. No, not one word. I know her duteous love,
But ſcorn to take advantage of her gratitude.
She ſhall be free as air, and uncontroll'd:
A perfect miſtreſs of her heart and hand,—
Uſe every honourable means, Sir Piers;
But no compulſion, no, not even perſuaſion
Shall ever come from me. I'll lead you to her.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Without the Abbey.

Enter LUPINO.

Lup. Although unmarked by the hand of juſtice,
Yet ſtill an exile from my native land
Like the firſt murtherer I ſullen rove,
Tormented by the never-dying worm
That preys inceſſant on my bleeding heart;
While baſe dependence checks th' aſpiring mind,
And want its icy fetters caſts around me:
Yet *he* for whom I hazarded my ſoul,
Enjoys the fruits of my o'erwhelming guilt:—

Then

Then ſince bereft of peace, I'll ſhare its ſpoils,
Or let confeſſion drag me into day,
With him the foul aſſociate of my crimes.
[*Enter* Sir Piers.
But lo! he comes. On his contracted brow
Sit diſappointment, rage, and dire revenge.—
How has Sir Piers ſucceeded in his ſuit!

Piers. As I expected—with unmingled ſcorn:
In words that ſeem'd the language of the heart,
Edwina finally rejects my love.
(Aſide.) —But be it ſo, there's now no other courſe,
And though a deſperate one, it ſhall be try'd.—
Is all prepar'd, and are your agents ſtaunch?

Lup. As e'er ſnuff'd blood: a preſent ample boon
And future golden hopes, confirm them yours.

Piers. But how are we ſecure from Everilda?

Lup. For that I have prepar'd by a forg'd letter,
To be in proper time convey'd unto her,
Informing her a ſtranger waits without
To claim a ſecret audience, and diſcloſe
A plot that trenches on her father's life.

Piers. Thou art the beſt of plotters: ere diſcover'd
We ſhall be far remov'd from their purſuit.
Come, cloſe Lupino—I have ſeen thee wear
The likeneſs of a human viſage, us'd
In Italy, though in this land unknown—

Lup. I have it here, and its attendant dagger;
You may have need of both—we ſeldom part them.

Piers. Now, good Lupino, mark the orchard poſtern;
The time draws near--be cloſely on the watch.
[*Exit* Lupino.
And

And am I armed like a baſe aſſaſſin ?
No matter now, this night ſhall ſtamp my fate.
'Tis thus conſpiracy, with wakeful eye,
Graſping her dagger 'midſt the awful gloom
Of deepeſt night, with ſlow and noiſeleſs tread
Moves like a ghoſt towards her dreadful purpoſe ;
And, caſting all humanity aſide,
Plants in a brother's breaſt the fatal ſteel :
But not the ſolemn gloom of ſilent night
Can give repoſe to guilt. The turbid ſoul
Starts at the knell of ever-waking conſcience,
And ſeeks in vain a ſhelter from her beam ;
And ev'n the breeze that whiſpers through the grove
Strikes on the guilty ear, and murmurs—murder!

[*Retires.*

Enter (ſlowly) EDWINA, *watched by* LUPINO.

Edwina. Me thinks I come to take a long farewel
Of theſe dear melancholy ſhades, where oft
The penſive hour has paſt! To-morrow's eve
May ſee them ours no longer, and th' abode
Of innocence polluted by the foe!

[Sir Piers *diſcovering himſelf*, Edwina *ſtarts.*

Piers. O fear not that, Edwina! here's a knight
Shall bear thee ſafe from all impending danger.

Edw. I do conjure you, ſtop not my return :
I thought you gone—for Heav'ns ſake, don't detain me!

Piers. Why all this fear of one who truly loves you ?

Edw. If you regard me, ſuffer me to paſs :
How my heart ſickens! once more, on my knees! [*kneels*

Piers.

Piers. (Aſide.) How lovely in diſtreſs!—my ſoul enjoys it!—

Edwina! know, you paſs theſe gates no more:
In my protection ſafe, I'll bear you hence,
Far from theſe threaten'd walls—you muſt be mine.

Edw. O never, never! Is there none to help?
O gracious Heaven! ſend help, or ſtrike me dead!

Piers. (angrily) What! is it death to bind your fate to mine?

Now, by the powers above! to-morrow's ſun
Shall ſee you mine, perhaps on eaſier terms
Than thoſe of marriage.——

Edw. ——By your brother's ſpirit,—
By hers who gave you birth, O ſpare me, ſpare me!
Good angels, O I'm loſt!—Lupino!

Lup. Sir Piers, lo! one advancing thro' the thicket
Seems by his garb a pilgrim or an hermit.

Piers. Thou haſt a poignard, and know'ſt how to uſe it;
Quick let him pay for this ill-tim'd intruſion.

Lup. That deed I leave to you; I've too much blood
Upon my hands already.——

Piers. ——Loitering villain!
Guard well Edwina—let her not eſcape!

[Lupino *ſtands over* Edwina *with a drawn dagger.*

Enter HERMIT.

[Sir Piers *goes to him maſqued, his ſword drawn.*

Hermit. What cries are thoſe for help? Are you, Sir Knight,
The violator of a damſel's honour,
Where ſhe ſhould find protection? *Piers.*

Piers. ——Peace! I ſay;
This inſtant quit the place. What brought you hither?

Her. Fate ſent me to protect the innocent.

Edwina. (wringing her hands) O, holy father, pity and protect me!

Piers. Soon ſhalt thou find how futile his protection!
Come, armed hypocrite, receive thy doom!

Her. (drawing a ſword hid beneath his gown) But not 'till injur'd virtue be aveng'd.

[*Fight, during which* Edwina *faints.* Groſmont *(the Hermit) wounds and diſarms* Sir Piers, *who flies. In the ſcuffle the Hermit's beard falls off, and diſcovers the face of* Groſmont *to* Lupino.

Lup. (in horror) By all the powers of hell! it is his form,
The form of Groſmont, murder'd by theſe hands.
Hide me! ye thickeſt ſhades, from his keen eye:
Yawn earth! and let the horrid chaſm receive me,
Altho' it leads me to my doom below! [*Exit.*

Groſmont. O ſweet Edwina! is it thus we meet,
After ſo long an abſence?——

Edw. (reviving from her ſwoon) ——Ah! who art thou?
If life thou loveſt, quit theſe horrid ſhades—
They ſcent of blood. See there the ſtern Lupino!
How ghaſtly and how horrid is that face!—
No mercy dwells behind thoſe fixed features——
And ſee! his right-hand graſps a bloody dagger—
'Tis warm from Groſmont's heart. O, murderous wretch!

The bracelet proves the bloody deed was done.

Groſ. O, my ſweet love! call back thy ſcatter'd ſenſes—

Thy Groſmont lives.——

Edw. ——O yes—he lives in Heaven—

—I ſoon ſhall follow him. Stand off, Sir Piers,

I never will be thine—my ſoul was Groſmont's.

Groſ. 'Tis not Sir Piers, my love! nay, look upon me!

Edw. *(ſtarting)* O! can it be?—thou art his gentle ſpirit—

How pale—how wan!—I cannot touch thee now.

Groſ. Reſtore her, gracious Powers! Look up, Edwina?

Thus let me fold thee once more to my boſom!

Recal thy wandering thoughts and look upon me.

Edw. I know that face—but yet I fain would weep.

How like art thou to him I lov'd!—he's gone!

The dark aſſaſſins murder'd him in France.

Groſ. O, theſe are welcome tears! How fares my love?

Edw. And art thou then my lov'd—my long loſt Groſmont?

Groſ. Thy conſtant love, to part from thee no more.

Edw. My head grows giddy with the ſudden change.

How cam'ſt thou hither, love, in this diſguiſe?

Groſ. Heaven ſent me, to preſerve thee from a ruffian,

And to defend thee from the threat'ning Dane.

Edw. I feel it all—I ſee thy truth unchang'd.

I little

I little thought on this ſide Heaven to meet thee,
And meet thee thus—the guardian of my honour.
O my full heart! My beſt expreſſions fail.

Groſ. Compoſe thyſelf my love, we ſhall be happy;
Our bright propitious ſtars ſhall from this day,
Smile on our hopes and gladden all our proſpects.

Edw. But tell me quickly, how thou 'ſcaped'ſt thoſe ruffians?

Groſ. I did not 'ſcape them. After evening's gloom,
As I alone paſs'd through a tangled foreſt,
I found my courſe check'd by three arm'd aſſaſſins:
I kept them all at bay, 'till one behind
Struck me a blow: by loſs of blood I fell:
They thought me dead, and fled. Inſenſible
Some time I lay; 'till, with returning life,
I found myſelf within an hermit's cell,
Who with a ſkilful hand had dreſs'd my wounds,
And in ſhort time, by healing herbs and prayer,
Reſtor'd me to full health: but as I laid
All welt'ring in my blood, Edwina's gift,
The pledge of love, was raviſh'd from my arm:
My ſword I found too gone.——

Edw. ——Myſterious Heaven!
Lupino brought that bracelet to thy brother,
—Thy ſword too, ſaying, Groſmont on his death-bed
Bequeath'd with that to him his whole domain.

Groſ. *(taking up the ſword)* Good Heaven! the ſword I wreſted from the ruffian!

Edw. That ruffian was thy brother.——

Groſ. ——O, too true!

Conviction

Conviction flashes on me. Matchless villain!

Edw. I'll tell thee all; but let us quit the place,
And not enjoy our happiness alone:—
With what delight will Raymond hail the hour
That gives his brave defender to his arms!
My Everilda too will share our bliss;
O may her virtues meet a like reward! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Lord Raymond's *Hall.*

Enter RAYMOND, ANSELM, OSBERT, *and* EVERILDA.

RAYMOND.

This is a wonderous tale—I did not think
Our earth could have produc'd so foul a monster.
And this vile wretch to be my Grosmont's brother!
No wonder I should be so much deceiv'd.

Osb. I never was, although I stood alone.

Ans. God, be his crimes within thy bounds of mercy!

Osb. Such mercy as a villain should receive
Be his! for none a fratricide deserves.
Soon may justice seize her full-grown victim,
And strike him from the list of human kind!

Ray. Well! let him rest.——

[*Enter* Grosmont *and* Edwina.

——Once more within these walls
I hail my brave preserver! Nearly sunk
Beneath the robber's force, thou didst relieve me;

And

And now (O happy omen!) com'ſt once more
To draw thy ſword reſiſtleſs in our cauſe.

Groſ. The ſword your bounty once on me beſtow'd,
Shall now be drawn for an auſpicious purpoſe.
This day's events forebode complete ſucceſs.

Anſ. The time draws near, my lord.——

Ray. ——Come, valiant Groſmont!

And ere we draw the ſword upon our foes,
Let us ſolicit bleſſings on our cauſe.

[*Scene draws up. The Choir of Streanſhall Abbey. At the upper end, an Altar and illuminated Croſs, with Tapers burning. On oppoſite ſides are ranged the* Monks *and* Nuns, *headed by the* Abbot. Everilda *and* Edwina *join them.*—Raymond, Oſbert, Groſmont, *and* Attendants.

After a pauſe is ſung the following

ODE TO PEACE.

[PORTER.]

CHORUS.

From thy celeſtial manſion, ſainted maid!
O Hilda! caſt an eye of pity down,
Impart thine interceſſion's powerful aid,
So ſhall ſweet Peace our ardent wiſhes crown.

SOLO.

The ſacred temple that aroſe,
On thine own choſen hill,
Protect from unbelieving foes,
And be its guardian ſtill.

DUET.

DUET.

Now gentle oriſons, ſoft ſighs,
From ſpotleſs boſoms given,
Waft their pure incenſe to the ſkies,
And reach the throne of Heaven.

FULL CHORUS.

From thy celeſtial manſion, ſainted maid!
O Hilda! caſt an eye of pity down,
Impart thine interceſſion's powerful aid,
So ſhall ſweet Peace our ardent wiſhes crown.

[*Curtain falls ſlowly.*

End of Act the Third.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Eminence, commanding a view (ſouthward) over the Bay of Ravenhill, and (northward) of the Abbey and Town of Streanſhall.

Enter GUTHRED, HAROLD, OSCAR, *Daniſh Chiefs, with* TROOPS, *and their* Standard *with the* Raven *worked upon it.*

GUTHRED.

NOW my victorious friends, once more we preſs
Theſe blood-drench'd ſhores that ſoon ſhall own us lords.
View yonder battlements, and thoſe tall ſpires
By ſuperſtition rais'd; then call to mind
The glittering ſtores encircled by their mounds;
Their coſtly ſhrines, beyond the dreams of avarice;

And,

And, what's ſuperior to their hoards of wealth,
Irradiant beauty to reward the brave:
All theſe our liberal gods have freely given—
Let your own valour ratify the boon.

Har. Nor ſhall our gods on cowards ſhow'r their gifts:
Reſiſtance hath to us been unforeſeen;
Yet have our ſoldiers nobly fleſh'd their ſwords,
When we for no impediment prepar'd
But cautious warriors, ſhelter'd by their walls.

Oſc. Whence ſprung this ſtubborn band of dauntleſs foes,
That dare to die, yet know not how to yield?
Thoſe unfledg'd champions, thoſe boys in arms,
Who durſt oppoſe the veteran troops of Denmark?
Though their pale forms in blood extended lie,
Yet has their frantic valour thinn'd our files.

Guth. Curſe on their promptitude! I look'd ere this
Our ſable flag had ſtream'd from yonder bulwarks.
And ſhall the courſe of victory be check'd
By ſteel-clad ſtriplings? By the drear abode
Of Hela, power tremendous! here I ſwear,
Ne'er to unclaſp this helm or ſheath this ſword,
'Till the proud lord of theſe domains ſinks down
Beneath its force and vainly begs his life.

Har. Long may the breath of conqueſt fan our banners:
But yet my chief, I fear in evil time
We've landed on theſe ſhores: our anchor'd fleet

Remains

Remains unſhelter'd from the riſing ſtorm
That ſeems to threaten from the eaſtern ſky.

Guth. Check not their ardour with far-fancied ills
And perils yet unſeen: theſe frowning ſkies
Chide our delay, and urge us to th' aſſault.
He whoſe ſtrong arm caſts down the crimſon banner
That ſtreams on yonder tower, gives an aſylum
To Denmark's fleet, which the extended arms
Of turbid Eſke ſhall welcome to its boſom.
Let thoſe who dread death's moſt terrific form,
Seek for ſecurity amidſt the daſtards,
Who trembling wait enſconc'd behind their walls.

Har. What cauſe ariſes for ſuch foul ſuſpicion?
No craven yet diſgrac'd the hoſts of Denmark:
Deſertion is to them a thing unknown.

Guth. Be it for ever ſo! Then dwell no more
On the exploits of thoſe who ſcorn our gods:
Better our bards be taught their country's ſongs,
And chaunt their triumphs o'er the ſons of Odin.
O, ſooner than their harp, let Guthred hear
Amidſt the clang of arms, their dying groans!

Har. When the loud trumpet calls us to the field,
Let blows, not words, approve our duty there:
Yet generous enmity becomes the brave,
And valour may be prais'd ev'n in a foe.

Guth. Praiſe it elſewhere, 'tis poiſon to mine ear:
A chriſtian's virtues but augment my hatred,
And their reſiſtance calls for tenfold vengeance.
Have not the frozen ſhores of Scandinavia
Pour'd forth their vengeance o'er the trembling ſouth?

Whoſe power but what has ſunk beneath our arms,
Or by their choiceſt treaſures bought forbearance?
While the o'erwhelming torrent ſwept along,
And Alps and Pyreneans roſe in vain.
Yet ſtill this ſtubborn iſle, this ſea-girt rock,
Louring defiance 'midſt the wreck of empires,
Braves the loud blaſt and ſtrengthens with the ſtorm.
Where are th' embattled legions of allies
That ſounded firſt the brazen trump of war?
The Roman eagle ſoars on high no more,
But crouches low beneath the raven's wings.

Har. My heart is ardent and my hands as firm
As yours, my chief, towards the common cauſe:
Yet when in council with my friends in arms,
I give my ſanction free and uncontroll'd:
Therefore I would with juſtice gild our cauſe,
And to the wondering world diſplay our mercy,
In a laſt ſummons ſent to yonder walls.

Oſc. Summons! my chief, what need of ſummons now?
Our eager ſquadrons, burning with revenge,
Wait but the ling'ring ſignal to ruſh forth,
Like famiſh'd lions, on their deſtin'd prey.

Har. Soon may their glorious ardour have its courſe!
But yet, amidſt the carnage of a ſtorm
Deſpair may ſeize the torch, and hungry flames
Bury our foes and golden hopes in ruin.

Guth. By Odin! true. A ſudden flaſh of light
Darts on my ſoul.——

Har. ——Remember Lindisferne!

Guth. The curſe of Hela reſt upon that iſle!
And doubly curſt be thoſe deteſted monks
Who ſafely bore away their golden treaſures,
And the void worthleſs caſket left behind!

Oſc. Then why not now ſecure the brilliant prize,
And let old Raymond and his ſhaven band
Have licenſe free to ſeek their wand'ring ſovereign?
Then policy would wear the maſk of merey.

Guth. Mercy to Britiſh foes! its very ſhade
Lights up anew the flames within my ſoul:
But yet, to ſave to you thoſe holy ſpoils,
I will my rage reſtrain and ſend a ſummons.
Oſcar, I long have mark'd the ſteady hate
Thou bear'ſt thoſe chriſtians, ardent as my own:
Then haſten to my tent, and there receive
With the white banner, thoſe reluctant ſummons,
And bear them quick to Raymoud—no delay;
Should they refuſe, the next be thoſe of death.

[*Exeunt* Guthred *and* Oſcar.

Enter REGINALD.

'*Reg.* Harold, to thee this coaſt hath long been
'known;
'Not ſo to me: then with deſcriptive tongue,
'Give to my knowledge thoſe ſurrounding lands.
'*Har.* Look to that point, majeſtic in decay,
'Frowning tremendous on the reſtleſs ſurge
'That ſweeps in angry whirls around its baſe.
'*Reg.* That point where ſtands the ruins of a tur-
'ret?
'*Har.* That towering height once bore the creſted
'pride 'Of

'Of Rome's imperial eagle; now adorn'd
'By our more potent raven's dreaded name.
'In ancient time, the watch-tower's* friendly blaze,
'Like a benignant ſtar, in midnight's gloom,
'Guided the veſſel through the pathleſs deep,
'And taught the anxious mariner to ſhun
'The lurking terrors of the rock-bound ſhore.
'*Reg.* Thoſe lawns upon the left, that bear the
'marks
'Of culture undiſturb'd?——
'*Har.* ——That ſmiling tract,
'Imboſom'd in the ſlope of circling hills
'Whoſe heathy ſummits kiſs the paſſing clouds,
'Is call'd the vale of Fyling.——
'*Reg.* ——Beauteous vale!
'How ſcatter'd woodlands ſhade with gloſſy verdure,
'The golden produce of the waving fields,
'That ſmile unconſcious of the awful change——
[*Enter* Guthred *haſtily.*
'*Guth.* A change that ſoon ſhall cover us with lau-
'rels.
'No longer ſhall theſe plains demand the cares
'Of Raymond's vaſſals: their incloſed treaſures,
'Their ripening harveſts, and their fleecy ſtores,
'Shall make atonement for ſuch proud reſiſtance:
'And thoſe who chang'd their ploughſhares for the
'ſword, 'Their

* In 1774, the foundation-ſtone of a Roman Phaſos or Watch-tower, was dug up near the point of Ravenhill, with a Latin inſcription, purporting its erection by Juſtinian the Præfect, in the maritime camp, for the benefit of ſhipping; which ſtone is now in the author's poſſeſſion.

'Their ghoſts ſhall ſummon thoſe indignant barons
'To meet their fate, and tell them 'tis the Dane
'That calls them forth to cloſe their feuds in blood.
'*Har.* Do we march on, or wait for Oſcar here?
'*Guth.* His buſineſs will be ſhort: we ſhall preſs
'forward,
'And with our troops begirt the walls of Streanſhall,
'There wait the olive, but prepare the ſtorm:
'Strike on our cymbals, bid the trumpets ſound,
'And ſoon by victory be our temples bound.

[*Exeunt, marching.*

SCENE II.

A Gothic Hall in Lord Raymond's *Palace.*

Enter RAYMOND, OSBERT, ANSELM, GROSMONT, *and* ATTENDANTS.

RAYMOND.

Whoſe trumpet ſounded at the weſtern gate?
Atten. My lord, an herald from the Daniſh army.
Ray. Let him approach.——

[*Enter* Oſcar *and Trumpet.*

——Soldier, your bearings tell me
You come from Guthred, who, without our leave,
Has come on hoſtile viſit to theſe ſhores.
Oſc. He needs no leave to land on ſhores our own.
Thus Guthred gave me charge to ſay to Raymond,
Since on your bloody coaſt you now have found
How vain is all reſiſtance, thus he ſends
A final ſummons,—"That you quit theſe walls

"And

" And render 'count of all your hidden treaſure:
" Three days' ſubſiſtence you will be allow'd,
" When you unbar your gates." What anſwers Raymond?

Groſ. Know you no other title? Would my chief
But *glance* permiſſion, with thy deareſt blood
For this ſpeech ſhould'ſt thou pay, inſulting Dane!

Oſc. My errand's not to thee: the ſword we wield,
Like the fell ſcythe of death, lays low diſtinction.
I know of no ſuperior: yet you
Crouch low to beings raiſed by yourſelves:—
Enough of this. Mark well the terms I bring—
On theſe conditions only look for mercy.

Ray. Mercy from you! ſuch mercy we diſdain.
Should we, the long mark'd victims of revenge,
Meet that which you deny'd your murder'd ſovereign?
He who was caſt in pity's ſofteſt mold;
Who felt not for himſelf, but for his people;
Who from the ground bade merit raiſe its front,
And penury come ſmiling from her cell.

Oſc. What's this to me? Came I to hear *his* praiſe?

Ray. Yes—he, your ſtern tribunal doom'd to death:
There, fiends devoid of nature, ſteep'd in blood,
Deny'd the beſt of kings:—ſhort preparation,
Three mournful days, to meet the Judge of All!
O! now if unembody'd ſpirits feel
The leaſt allay of bliſs, your ſlaughter'd king
Still drops a tear upon his country's fate,
And kneels a ſuppliant at the Throne of Mercy,
To grant that grace to his deluded people
Which they deny'd to him!—— *Oſc.*

Oſc. ——He none deſerv'd.
The blow that covers Denmark's ſons with glory,
Was bravely ſtruck by their united arms:
Thoſe who were galled with their fetters, roſe
To ſhew the world a deed of dreadful juſtice.

Ray. Unerring juſtice views with tearful eye
The victim ſad neceſſity demands:
But cruelty with cowardice combin'd,
Fill up misfortune's chalice to the brim,
And caſt a ghaſtly ſmile upon thoſe pangs
By art protracted to the verge of life.
Had you but caſt your ſovereign from his throne
With them he held moſt dear, to wander forth
Beneath the ſcorching heat of mid-day ſuns,
And with unſhelter'd head to brave the dews
Of chilling night, amongſt your gentler wolves,
Mercy it would have been: but that you know not.

Oſc. Surely thou mean'ſt, by theſe preſumptuous words,
To rouſe for thy deſtruction direſt vengeance.
Had *I* commanded Denmark's conquering ſons,
No ſummons hadſt thou known: nor had the choice
To ſeek through Athelney's wild brakes, thy king
The wandering Alfred.——

Anſ. Thanks to the ſkies, our hero ſtill ſurvives
—The father of his country and her hope!
And though envelop'd in misfortune's cloud,
His ſun of glory yet ſhall brilliant ſhine.
When Denmark's honours ſink beneath the main,
Old Ocean ſhall, upon a future day,

See a victorious navy hail him ſire;
When the red bolt launch'd from a Britiſh arm,
Shall ſhake the ſhores of Tiber and the Nile.

Oſc. Hence, dreaming prophet! he *you* call'd our king,
Was by our will depriv'd of this high office,
Becauſe he knew not how to govern freemen.

Anſ. Say rather robbers! He who *was* your king,
In that high office guiltleſs was approv'd:
His gentle hand ſway'd not an iron rod,
But bore a golden ſceptre.——

Oſc. ——Truly fit
To govern gownſmen; who, recluſe in cells,
Prepare their fetters to enchain mankind,
And bid them yield the ſlaves of ſuperſtition;
The ſlave of her who reſts her tottering throne
On human folly;—who, leſt zeal ſhould cool,
Can call forth *mortal* engines to her aid,
And bid low crouching bigots wield her ſword,
Or carry faggots to thè funeral pile.

Anſ. *(Aſide.)* Would this were falſe! but ev'n from impious tongues
The voice of truth commands our veneration.—
Spotleſs Religion will diſclaim ſuch aid:
While on her ebon throne dark ſuperſtition,
'Midſt racks and wheels ſits ruminating ſad;
Repoſe a ſtranger to her troubled breaſt;
Where all is turbulence and vengeful gloom;
Her eye malignant ſhooting glances dire
On the poor wretch for errour doom'd to bleed:—

Not

Not ſo, Religion: ſhe, with eye ſerene,
By reaſon join'd, points out the bliſsful path
To penitence and peace; or drops a tear,
Such tears as angels weep, on thoſe ingrates
Who cloſe their eyes againſt the beams of truth,
And ſcorn the hand that points to bliſs immortal.

Oſc. Too much of this! I come not to debate
With meddling prieſts, whoſe ſwords lie in the tongue;
I, the reluctant bearer of theſe ſummons
That bid thee, Raymond, yield unto our power,
Demand thy anſwer?——

Ray. ——Hear it in denial,
In firm rejection of your offer'd terms:
For know, thou haughty Dane! that Raymond ſcorns
Such terms as cowards only would accept.
Death waits on all; and where can valour find
A nobler grave, than in the field of honour?

Oſc. By Sangrida! a brave reply. Farewel!
Be but your ſwords as poignant as your tongues,
Your conqueſt will add honour to our arms:
For know, when next we meet, we meet in blood.
[*Exit* Oſcar.

Ray. Give him ſafe conduct to the Daniſh camp.
And now, my friends, our final hopes depend
On our good ſwords and in protecting Heaven!

Groſ. How my blood ſtirs at the imperious threats
Of this proud infidel! How longs my ſoul
To try his proweſs in the martial field!
Preſumptuous railer!——

Anſ. ——He's below your anger:
Thus doth the wolf malignant bay the moon; Yet

Yet even on him ſhe caſts her ſilver rays,
Regardleſs of his howling.——
Groſ. ——Fear them not;
Their baſe deſigns have now a full avowal:
For an high threat'ning and an open foe
We ſtand prepar'd; but a pretended friend
Stings as he ſmiles. While their ſucceſs was doubtful,
Their cautious chiefs mov'd on with tardy ſteps:
All foreign conqueſt with ſtrong oaths diſclaim'd:
With bold appeal durſt call upon the ſkies
To juſtify their cauſe:—lull'd by theſe arts,
The bordering nations ſlumber'd o'er their arms,
Until, in dread ſucceſſion, they were call'd
By a victorious foe to bonds or death.
Oſb. Death's a ſure refuge from inglorious bonds;
But victory, my chief, may crown our arms,
And blaſt theſe ſpoilers' hopes.——
Ray. ——I truſt it will.
Anſ. Your cauſe is that of juſtice, theirs of blood.
Caſt on the wreck of Lindisferne your eyes!
The peaceful train fled from her hallow'd walls,
Where cruelty prepar'd for ſcenes of death;
Loud howl the winds amongſt the ſhatter'd towers;
The fox obſcene ſtalks o'er the moſs-grown fragments,
And round the ſculptur'd canopies of ſaints
The deadly nightſhade and the ivy cling;
Where once the ſwelling anthem roſe to Heaven,
Within the lonely choir deep ſilence reigns;
And deſolation gives the bird of night
An undiſturb'd abode; while ſad remembrance

Figures paſt ſcenes amidſt the ſhapeleſs ruins:
Theſe are the triumphs of that ſavage horde,
Before whoſe march the ſweets of Eden bloom,
But *all*'s a howling wilderneſs behind. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Daniſh Camp, a ſhort diſtance from the Walls of Streanſhall.

Enter GUTHRED, HAROLD, *and* REGINALD.

GUTHRED.

How lingers Oſcar! my impatience chides
His tardy ſteps: what cauſe can keep him yonder?

Har. Perchance the foe is treating for ſurrender?

Guth. I wiſh it not, nor like thoſe tedious treaties.
My burning ſoul would make them ours by ſtorm.
Eſcape they cannot—even within their walls
Revenge points out the road to their deſtruction.
Th' infernal powers, propitious to our hopes,
Amidſt our foes have ſown the ſeeds of diſcord:
Ours was to mark their growth and reap the harveſt.
Thoſe thankleſs minions of indulgent fortune
Long have mov'd careleſs on the ſilver ſtream,
Fann'd by the tepid air of gay proſperity,
But reckleſs of the ſlowly-riſing ſtorm
That on the angry eve may overwhelm them.

[*Enter* Oſcar.

Oſcar, how treats Old Raymond our laſt ſummons?

Oſc. With ſtern defiance and high-minded ſcorn.

Guth.

Guth. Holds he his life ſo light? now, by my ſword!
His firm rejection gives me gloomy pleaſure.
Prepare our engines—haſten the aſſault:
You, Harold, with your lance-men will advance
By rapid movements to ſecure our left:
Guard well each paſs—mark every deep defile
That leads from Maulay's ſtrong-hold to the abbey—
Look to each copſe and every twiſted brake,
For ſhowers of arrows lurk within their coverts:
But note me well—no quarter give to thoſe
You find in ambuſh; if they mercy crave,
Let them receive it from the lance's point:—
But your chief care muſt be the various fords
Of winding Eſke, when the tide quits her ſhores;
The leaſt attempt to paſs muſt be repell'd,
Even to the point of life. The guides I give you
Have long, as hunters, trac'd each verge of ground,
And ſhould they fail, no common death awaits them;
But torments ſuch as fiends ſhall view with wonder,
And grin with rage to ſee themſelves outdone..

Har. Your orders ſhall all prompt obedience meet.
—But who approaches here with breathleſs haſte?
His looks ſome dire calamity forebode.

Enter a Daniſh OFFICER.

Offi. My chief, I'm juſt deſcended from the height
Near which our navy rides: the ſtorm increaſes—
The curling billows ſeem to threat the ſkies;
Then foaming burſt in thunder o'er the rocks,
And ſwallow up the long reſounding ſhore.
Sometimes our ſhips are borne amidſt the clouds—

Then

Then plunging ſeek the dark abyſs below.
Two are diſmaſted, and the whole in peril.

Guth. Then can no help be given them from the ſhore?

Offi. Impoſſible! all naval ſkill is vain.

Gnth. Then muſt we ſeek for ſupernatural aid.
Where at this awful time, are our magicians?

Oſc. Acting their rites upon the rugged ſhore,
With invocation loud they ſeek by charms
To render the infernal powers propitious.

Guth. Quick let us join them—they may yet give hope. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A dark Cavern on the Sea Shore;

Within which is a rude Altar, on which a Fire is kept burning. Daniſh Magicians, during the Recitative and Ode, occaſionally feed the Flame.

MAGICIANS, GUTHRED, OSCAR, REGINALD *and* ATTENDANTS.

RECITATIVE.—TAYLEURE.

1ſt. MAGICIAN.

THE ſun retires behind the ſulph'rous cloud,
And louring ſhades the heath-clad ridges ſhroud;
Chill from the drizzling ſouth, with hollow ſound,
Fell noxious vapours ſweep the black profound:
On the rude rugged ſhore, the daſhing wave
Sends its hoarſe echoes through each winding cave.

2d. MAGICIAN.

Now, ſlow aſcending from night's tenfold gloom,
Ye potent Siſters! wrapt in horrors, come!
Borne on the blaſt,—with incantations dire,
Full on our foes be ſhed your baleful ire! [*Thunder.*

3d. MAGICIAN.

Unnerve their chiefs; with peſtilential breath,
Bid Sangrida prepare the feaſt of death:
And while terrific viſions float in air,
To the fierce God your myſtic rites prepare.

ODE.

GREAT Odin! king of gods and men,
Thou who beyond low mortals' ken,
Sternly ſerene, amidſt the driving ſtorms
That howl around thy airy fane,
Sit'ſt high enthron'd, above the ghoſtly forms,
Of frowning chiefs in battle ſlain,
CHORUS Dread lord of thunder, hail! [*Thunder.*

Where from the ſkulls of ſlaughter'd foes,
The hydromel abundant flows;
The glittering falchion and the burniſh'd ſhield,
Caſt their ſtrong rays around the myſtic hall,
Bearing the marks of many a ſanguine field,
Where ſmiling victory ſaw thy heroes fall:
CHORUS. O let our charms prevail!

FULL CHORUS.

Bare thy all-potent arm—ſo 'tis decreed,
Nine captive youths ſhall on thine altars bleed;
And, 'midſt the grateful fumes of human gore,
Thy ſacred raven to th' empyrean ſoar:
While, grimly pleas'd, the awful Siſters ſee,
An offering due from us, and worthy thee.

[*Thunder and Lightening.*

Enter

Enter a SOLDIER, *haſtily.*

Sol. O, day of horror! What terrific ſights
Theſe eyes have witneſs'd!—our once gallant fleet,
That yeſter' morn ſo proudly preſs'd the waves,
Is now no more!——

Guth. ——Can it be poſſible?

Sol. Too true, my chief! The elements combin'd
Have ſpent their force upon the hopes of Denmark.
The howling winds uprear'd the curling waves,
And the black clouds ſent forth their rattling hail;
While thunder, louder than the roaring ſurge,
Follow'd in dreadful breaks the light'nings flaſh.
Of our late noble fleet but two ſurvive,
Who, with an humble ſail and ſhatter'd maſts,
Seek their laſt refuge on the boundleſs main:
The reſt have met their fate upon the rocks,
Or been ingulphed in the whelming wave.

Guth. *(Aſide.)* And now, my ſoul, ſhrink not before this ſtorm!
All is not loſt—the mind's unconquer'd ſtill!—
[Snatches a javelin from a Soldier and mounts an eminence.
Chieftains and warriors of the hoſts of Denmark,
To whom no face of danger can be new,
Think not our gods have ſent their vengeful bolts
For our deſtruction: no, my valiant friends!
What we have ſuffer'd from the raging ſkies
Is what the blazing torch ſhould have atchiev'd,
Soon as our ſhips diſcharg'd their living freight:
The gods have done it, and by this proclaim
Theſe lands your own, from whence there's no retreat:

Then

Then caſt your eyes upon thoſe lofty towers;
Too long have they defy'd our armed powers.
Soon ſhall our engines Raymond's ſons appal—
Soon ſhall their ſtandard from her bulwarks fall;
With victory and wealth your hopes be crown'd,
When Streanſhall's walls are levell'd with the ground.

[*Exeunt.*

End of Act the Fourth.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Hall in Lord Raymond's *Palace.*

Enter EVERILDA *and* EDWINA.

EDWINA.

O EVERILDA! what a night was laſt!

Eve. It was a night indeed, replete with horror!
Even now I feel the rocking battlements,
And hear the ſavage blaſt, that howls around
The lofty towers of this firm-pillar'd abbey.

Edw. The clouds, in horrible convulſions rent,
Pour'd forth their ſweeping ſtores of rattling hail;
And forked light'nings, with ſucceſſive blaze,
Gave warning of the loud redoubling peal,
That ſeem'd to ſhake this tall majeſtic pile
To its foundation: while the foaming waves
Swell'd into mountains, came in thunder down
Upon the rugged rocks that ſkirt our ſhores.

O!

O! 't was a night of congregated terrors!
Big with deſtruction and the ſounds of death.

Enter GROSMONT. *(ſpeaks.)*

Bright riſe the morn upon your gentle wiſhes!
Your reſt I fear has ſuffer'd from the ſtorm.

Eve. The dead, incloſed in the ſilent vault,
Alone could reſt in ſuch a night as laſt:
The knotted oak could not withſtand its force—
While tenfold horrors on the ocean reign'd.

Groſ. The tempeſt that has ſhook our loftieſt towers,
Falls with full ſweeping vengeance on the foe:
Their warlike fleet, that like a threat'ning cloud
Hung on our deſtin'd coaſt, is now no more:
The tempeſt's ſtrength is ſpent; the falling wave
Rolls o'er their bury'd hopes; the ſurge-beat rocks
Receive the ſhatter'd remnants of the ſtorm;
And pallid corſes ſpread the fatal ſtrand.

Edw. Alas! for pity. Would the weſtern gales
Had ſwift propell'd them to their native ſhores!
How many mothers caſt an anxious eye
Over the boſom of the treach'rous deep!
How many widows preſs within their arms
The deareſt pledges of their former love!
When they, alas! ſhall never more behold
The duteous ſon or the indulgent ſire!

Groſ. This ruin they have brough upon themſelves
In ſeeking to enſlave the human race:
The ſanctity of leagues they violate,
And ſteal like ruffians on the hour of peace:
'Who would exalt with freedom's ſacred name

'That

'That fatal tree, whoſe roots are nurs'd in blood;
'Whoſe fruit, ſo fair to view, like Sodom's apples,
'Contain the deadlieſt poiſon: o'er it hangs
'An heavy peſtilential atmoſphere,
'Preſſing to earth the wretches that ſurround it.

Eve. Would they were gone, and peace reſum'd her reign!
No longer ſhould the ruſtic's harmleſs train,
Compell'd to wander from their native vale,
Forſake the cottage where contentment ſmil'd:
No more the beach be drench'd with human blood;
But our defenders live in peace and honour,
And arms now uſeleſs, deck the trophied hall.

Groſ. Would it were ſo! but juſtice hath her claim,
And vengeance, with her garments ſteep'd in blood,
Demands full retribution for thoſe crimes
That riſe in crimſon clouds to yonder ſkies.

Enter RAYMOND *and* OSBERT.

Ray. Groſmont, my friend! with what eventful days
Thy life is mark'd! through treachery's dark maze
Eſcap'd from death,—here you find little reſt,
While theſe fierce Danes ſo cloſe begirt our walls.

Groſ. That gracious Being who preſerv'd my life,
Though marked by the baſe aſſaſſin's ſteel,
Bids me with ardour meet an open foe.
I truſt, my lord, ere the declining ſun
Sinks in the main, to ſee beneath your feet
Theſe boaſting enemies, whoſe final hope
Muſt be in the raſh efforts of deſpair.

Oſb. Spoke like a ſoldier and a ſon of Britain!
By Heaven! it glads my ſoul to join in arms
Such gallant ſpirits as inſure ſucceſs.
I truſt ere night our ſwords ſhall do them juſtice,
And ſend theſe Danes to meet their friends below.

Groſ. Inſulted juſtice leads us to the field;
But yet, my friend, I feel a ſtronger cauſe—
The cauſe of beauty, innocence, and virtue:
All theſe conjoin'd muſt conſecrate our ſwords,
Steel our firm nerves, and make us more than mortal.

Ray. Now for a final charge to our brave troops!
The battlements are all completely lin'd,
But let our care mark well St. Mary's tower;
'Tis there we may expect the firſt attack.

Oſb. It would the coldeſt heart inſpire with valour,
To ſee the glowing cheeks and ardent eyes
Of thoſe who march to man our threaten'd walls;
In this dread calm they frowning wait the ſtorm,
In ſilence deep, intrepidly ſerene.—

Ray. And our brave veterans with heroic fire
Inſpiriting our youths, by their example,
To live with honour, or to die like men.——
The curaſſiers that guard the weſtern gate,
Oſbert, muſt be prepar'd to ſally forth,
Should we repulſe them in their firſt attack,
Which will be dreadful as deſpair can make it:
I fear not then the day will be our own.
My children! [*to Everilda and Edwina*] I will ſee you both anon:
Troubled and ſhort has been your time of reſt;

But

But ſoon, I truſt, with Heaven's approving aid,
Our ſwords ſhall give us firm and laſting peace.
[*Exit with* Oſbert.

Eve. O Groſmont, how I tremble for my father!
This martial fire eraſes from his mind
Twice thirty winters that have blanch'd his hair,
And planted furrows in his reverend cheeks.
Should he be tempted to the bloody field,
Good Groſmont mark him with a watchful eye!

Groſ. His life is far more precious than my own.
Not one of thoſe who march by his command,
But muſt revere him as their chief and father:
Should the leaſt danger threat his honour'd head,
Their ſwords will form a ſteely rampart round him.

Eve. His chiefeſt guard muſt be protecting Heaven:
O may it hearken to a daughter's prayer!
Who for the beſt of ſires implores its aid.

Groſ. Fear not, good lady! all will yet be well.

Edw. How precious is his welfare to us all!
The friend of man—the father of his people:—
For my ſake too, guard well his valued life;
(Tenderly.) Nor Groſmont, think thine own beneath thy care.

Groſ. My life is yours, and muſt be worth my care.
But now my duty calls. Shall I conduct you
Towards the abbey gate? Your prayers aſſiſt us!
[*Exit.*

Eve. More earneſt ones ne'er met the Throne of Grace:
Good Groſmont, lead the way—you muſt be gone.
O may we meet again in joy and peace! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

The Daniſh Camp, under the Walls of Streanſhall.

Enter GUTHRED, OSCAR, *and* REGINALD.

GUTHRED.

So long do we delay this threaten'd ſtorm,
Theſe chriſtians may ſuppoſe our courage droops,
And that we mourn in vain our recent loſs;
But no—although our friends beneath the wave
Met not a warrior's death, their ſpirits dwell
With Odin, and ſhall meet an equal fate
With thoſe who fell more nobly by the ſword.——
But who comes hither, guarded and in chains?
[*Enter* Sir Piers, Guard, &c.
What gloomy thing art thou, that with bent brow
Caſts round thy haggard looks? Where was he taken?

Guard. Within two bow-ſhots from the outer guard:
We judged him a ſpy; but by his bearings,
He ſeems to be of much ſuperior note.

Guth. Speak chriſtian! for ſo thy garb denotes thee.
Say what thou art? Full well thou know'ſt our power:
Torture and mercy lie within our breaſts.

Piers. I know your power, nor think that I diſdain it,
Though life is now ſcarce worthy my regard.
You aſk me what I am? My name is Groſmont,
The lawful lord of all thoſe ſmiling plains,
That not far diſtant ſkirt the banks of Eſke,

But

But of them wronged by a treacherous brother,
Aſſiſted by the lord of yonder towers.

Guth. (Aſide.) His death delay'd; his knowledge may be uſeful.—
Is this your chriſtian juſtice? Join our troops,
And thou ſhalt ſee thy wrongs effac'd in blood:
And if thou canſt inform us of the ſtrength
That animates theſe walls, thy lot may be
Above thy higheſt hopes.——

Piers. ——From my poſſeſſions
By violence driv'n, I have no tie on earth,
And therefore with my fortunes join your arms,
And pledge myſelf to give you ſtrict account
Of Streanſhall's force, and where her weakneſs lies;
The treaſures too that load her ſecret vaults,
Inſcrutable but to the eye of truſt,
To me have long been known: and in return,
When conqueſt ſpreads her triumphs o'er theſe walls,
And the black ſtandard flies on yonder tower,
I aſk but thoſe domains which once were mine,
With liberty to chuſe amongſt your captives,
A ſingle female that I once have known.

Guth. Make good thy promiſes, thy wiſh is granted.
We are not chriſtians! Oſcar, take him hence,
(Aſide.) But let a truſty guard attend him cloſely.

Piers. Now Oſbert, thou ſhalt feel me! my revenge
Shall be complete. Edwina too ſhall crown
My ſwelling triumph o'er my ſinking foes!

[*Exit with* Oſcar.

Guth. 'Tis not in mercy to theſe chriſtian ſlaves
I ſeek the aid of thoſe, whoſe faith is worn Like

Like a looſe robe, to ſuit all change of time:
Low groveling traitors! by no paſſions mov'd,
But crawl on earth the ſordid ſlaves of intereſt:
Yet thoſe (the work of darkneſs done) dare hope
To ſhare the bright reward of martial toil!
But ſteel, not gold, ſhall grace the hand of juſtice,
And give ſuch traitors the reward they merit.

[*Enter* Oſcar, Reginald, *and* Captains.

Oſcar, are all our troops prepar'd to march?

Oſc. All are in readineſs, and wait your orders.

Guth. Gothmund, you will command the firſt aſſault
Againſt the ſouthern bulwark: when your bowmen
And miſſile engines ſhall have clear'd their walls,
Let the ram thunder on the rocking tower—
A breach made there, the town muſt be our own.
Oſcar, I ſend you, with our new ally,
Where they ſeem leaſt prepar'd, towards the eaſt;
When you have ſcal'd the walls, preſs to the poſtern,
Burſt its barr'd gates, and hew down oppoſition:
No quarter give—the hour of mercy's paſt,
And the grim ſpirits of our ſlaughter'd friends
Muſt be appeas'd with blood. But cloſely mark
This late revolted chriſtian; ſhould he fail,
Let his head anſwer for his breach of faith.

Oſc. Fear not, my chief: he who deſerts the cauſe
Of his own country, muſt be ſlightly truſted.

Guth. Myſelf with Reginald, will lead the troops
To ſtorm the weſtern gate: the walls firſt thinn'd,
Our poleaxe-men ſhall hew us down a paſſage.

Mourn

Mourn haughty Streanſhall! now thy fate draws near,
Soon ſhall thy boſom feel the plunging ſpear.
See, victory calls you to th' embattled wall,
And bliſs immortal, thoſe who nobly fall:
Sound then the charge! give the ſhrill trumpet breath,
That ſummons us to glory, or to death. [*Exeunt.*

[*An Alarm of Drums and Trumpets.*

SCENE III.

An open Place within the City of Streanſhall.

[*Alarm continues.*

Enter RAYMOND *and* SOLDIERS.

RAYMOND.

Strengthen our force upon the eaſtern tower,
Where we have leaſt expected their attack—
With ſtill increaſing numbers they ruſh on—
Taking advantage of th' unguarded wall,
Their pioneers attempt to paſs the moat!

[OSBERT *on the Walls.—Alarm bell rings.*

Down with their ladders—archers ply your bows!
If e'er they croſs the ditch and gain the wall,
It ſhall be o'er the bodies of their ſlain.
Now for your country—Albion and St. George!

[*Exit from the Walls.*

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. Groſmont, my lord, commends him to his chief:

Three

Three fierce attacks upon St. Mary's tower
Have bravely been repuls'd: the ponderous ram
Is now drawn forth in vain againſt our bulwarks:
Its covering burnt, our arrows ſhower like hail
Upon the aſſailants' heads; while, mad with rage,
Fierce Guthred forms his lance-men in cloſe line,
To lodge their ſpears in all that dare retreat.

Enter another OFFICER.

Offi. The eaſtern tower's reliev'd! without the walls
Edgar completes the ruin of our foes:
They ſtrive no longer, but reſign their arms.

Ray. Now let us ſnatch the time—the tide is turn'd,
And our brave ſoldiers, burning with revenge,
Long in the open plain to meet the foe:
Then let us cheriſh this heroic ardour,
And from our yawning gates pour forth a ſtorm
Of ſweeping vengeance on their ſhrinking hoſt. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Without the Walls of Streanſhall.

Enter GUTHRED *and* SOLDIERS.

GUTHRED.

Curſe on theſe cowards! active in retreat,
With womens' hearts beneath the forms of men!
Thrice have our foes repuls'd them from their walls,
And ſcatter'd terror through their broken ranks!
Turn, Daniſh traitors! to the charge once more—

Retrieve

Retrieve your honour in the blood of Britons:
By the infernal powers! the firſt that ſhrinks,
Shall in his breaſt receive this reeking ſword:
Your lives are not your own, when Odin calls
To victory or triumph in the ſkies.

[*They charge the* Britiſh Troops *who had ſallied from the gate; the* Britons *begin to give way, leaving* Raymond *who headed them, nearly alone.*

Ray. Advance, my friends, the day is yet our own!
Keep firm your ranks and charge the foe again!

Guth. Chriſtian it is in vain—our gods fight for us:
Yield to our power—reſiſtance calls for death.

Ray. I was not born to yield to ſavage foes;
This arm, though old, wields an unconquer'd ſword.

Guth. Preſumptuous dotard! that ſhall ſoon be try'd.

[*Fight,* Raymond *is diſarmed by* Guthred.

Guth. Now art thou mine, wouldſt thou preſerve thy life,
Send inſtant orders to give up the town,
Or thy own blood ſhall anſwer for refuſal.

Ray. What is my life, now it is in thy power?
But my untainted honour is my own,
Beyond all human force: O could my voice
Be heard on yonder towers, my parting words
Should urge our ſons to liberty or death!

Guth. And is it thus thou ſcorn'ſt my offer'd mercy?
Too long I've dally'd—this then to thy heart!

[*Prepares to ſtab him.*—*Enter* Edgar *on the oppoſite ſide, his ſword drawn—Trumpet ſounding.*

Edg. Hold thy baſe hand, thou vile blood-thirſty Dane!

Nor dare to violate that reverend temple
Where age and honour join their ſacred names.
Turn and behold a miniſter of vengeance!
Sent forth to call thee to a dreadful charge—
For breach of oaths, for rapine, and thoſe crimes
That long have ſteep'd theſe plains in blood and ruin.

Guth. Dar'ſt thou approach to check my ſweeping rage,
To wreſt the palm of victory from my graſp?
By Denmark's gods! the feeble dotard's life
Shall not ſuffice to glut my great revenge:
Our angry gods demand another victim,
And I thus ſend thee to the ſhades below.

Edg. Firſt ſpeed thee thither, murderous, cruel fiend,
And make atonement for this waſte of blood!

Guth. The cave of death yawns on thee, and the ghoſts
Of thoſe thy hand has ſlain, demand thy life!

[*Fight. After a conſiderable ſtruggle,* Edgar *twice wounds* Guthred, *who, at the laſt, drops his ſword, and falls into the arms of two Soldiers.*

Guth. Curſe on my feeble arm and erring ſword,
That fail'd to pierce thy heart! May the blue venom
Which from the jaws of Hela's ſerpent foams,
Fall drop by drop upon thy tortur'd heart!

Edg. Thy curſes are as futile as thy ſword,
And equally the objects of my ſcorn:
Go bear him hence; for much remains undone—
They ſtill oppoſe us at the ſouthern tower.

Guth. Are theſe my triumphs? Odin! Is it thus

I fall

I fall beneath a chriſtian's ſword?—O agony!
Lead me to death—your mercy I diſdain! [*Led off.*

Edg. Is Raymond ſafe?——

Officer. ——While you engag'd the Dane
His ſoldiers rally'd, and he heads them ſtill.

Edg. Thank Heaven! Now forward preſs my valiant friends—
Another ſtruggle ends this deadly conteſt,
And victory ſoon ſhall crown our bleeding brows!

[*Engage on both ſides.* Edgar's *party drive the* Danes *back; he returns with the Daniſh Standard.*

[*Shouts behind.*

Edg. (holding the Standard.) Now fail your charms, your ſanguine gods forſake you;
With human blood their altars bluſh in vain;
Their horrid forms avenging flames devour,
And their dread rites no more ſhall ſtain our ſhores.

Enter an Officer *haſtily.*

Offi. My lord, our foes give way on every ſide—
They caſt away their arms and call for mercy.

Edg. Quarter to all but thoſe who ſtill reſiſt us;
We know no enemies but thoſe in arms;
Slaughter too long hath ſtalk'd its deadly round!
(Trumpet.) Sound then our trumpet, death's fell work is done.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE V.

The interior of Raymond's *Palace; diſcovers* RAYMOND *and* SOLDIERS.

Enter EDGAR, &c. *with the* Daniſh Standard.

EDGAR.

Health and long life attend the chief of Streanſhall!
My lord, I lay with tranſport at your feet,
The Daniſh ſtandard and their final hope:
Their confidence in this exceeded bounds;
'Twas held the fatal ſiſters wove the woof,
Beſprinkled with the blood of human victims;
And, as the texture grew, with myſtic ſong
They call'd down Odin's vengeance on their foes.

Ray. Welcome, my brave deliverer! to theſe arms,
Where Edgar, thou too long haſt been a ſtranger.
My Everilda too ſhall ſhare our joy!
Come forth, my child, and welcome to theſe walls
The brave preſerver of thy father's life.

Enter EVERILDA *and* EDWINA.

Eve. Such noble actions are their own reward,
And grace the victor with unfading laurels;
Words feebly ſhew th' emotions of my heart.
(To Edgar.) A father ſnatch'd from death—preſerv'd by you!
O Edgar! let my ſilence ſpeak the reſt,
And your own mind tell how I ought to thank you.

Edg. Sweet words of tranſport! Long, my Everilda,
Have we deſponding wander'd through the gloom;

But

But now the ſun of hope caſts forth its beams,
Bids Nature ſmile, and gilds our future proſpects.

Eve. With conſcious bluſhes long I ſtrove to hide
A paſſion that, perhaps, my eyes reveal'd;
But after ſervices beyond all price,
I throw aſide reſerve, and gladly ſhare
My Edgar with his Country: yet thy father!—

Edg. Fear not, my love,—he muſt, he will conſent.

Enter MAULAY.

Mau. Come to thy father's arms, my gallant boy!
Whoſe every wiſh is now completely crown'd!
Who ſees beyond the grave, our houſe's honour
Beam with increaſing luſtre in his ſon.
My good Lord Raymond! thus without your leave
I've paſs'd your gates, but ſent my harbinger,
I truſt a welcome one, to lead the way.

Ray. All thanks are poor, too mean for his deſert,
Whoſe virtues long I've mark'd, ere glory crown'd them
On this auſpicious day. For you, my lord,
Your preſence glads me more, than when of old
Beneath one roof we paſs'd the ſocial hours.

Mau. Be diſcord baniſh'd hence—for ever baniſh'd!

Ray. And *all* forgot, my lord; ev'n your laſt meſſage.

Mau. What can you mean! It was a cordial one.

Ray. *(ſmiling.)* That by Sir Piers.——

Mau. ——Moſt true; the very ſame.

Ray. How have we both been wrong'd!——

Mau. ——If you received
Aught but the warmeſt wiſhes for our union,
I have been baſely wrong'd.—— *Ray.*

Ray. ——I ſee it all,
And ſhortly will explain it. But this night
Muſt be devoted all to joy and triumph.

Mau. But yet me thinks our joys are incomplete:
I'm proud, my lord, this day to own a ſon,
Whoſe well-tim'd valour hath preſerv'd my friend:
It is my wiſh, but ſtill beyond my power,
To make him happy—*(to Raymond)* that remains with you,
And with this gentle lady *(to Everilda)*; whom I hope,
With pride and joy, to call my Edgar's wife.

Ray. Had Edgar ne'er been grac'd with noble birth,
His ardent valour and his milder virtues
Could claim no leſs reward: with tranſport thus
I join their hands, and call the hoſt of ſaints
To give their ſanction to a parent's bleſſings!

Edg. (to Raymond and Maulay) My lord—my father,—this o'erburthen'd heart
Strives to expreſs its gratitude in vain:
To both I bend the knee; and ſee with rapture,
The torch of diſcord ſink in endleſs night,
And peace diffuſe her bleſſings o'er the land.

[*Enter* Groſmont *and* Edwina.

Ray. Groſmont, my valiant friend! there yet remains
A debt of gratitude long due to thee:
My lovely charge, my ſecond child, Edwina,
She can alone reward thy gallant ſervice;
And now, I truſt, will not withdraw her hand.

Edw. No, nor her heart, from him who nobly ſav'd
The life of Raymond and Edwina's honour.

Mau.

Mau. Groſmont, I've lately heard thy wond'rous tale:
Henceforth look on my Edgar as a brother;—
And mark, that from this day I enfranchiſe
Thee and thy heirs forever from all homage,
Once due from Groſmont to the houſe of Maulay.

Edg. By this embrace, my ever-valued friend,
My father's act is ratify'd by me.

Groſ. Your generous boon commands my warmeſt thanks,
And firm attachment muſt in part repay it.
For you, Lord Raymond, language is too weak;
My heart you know—you've made Edwina mine.

Oſbert. My lord, the pris'ners wait for your commands.

Ray. Let them advance, and ſoon ſhall be prepar'd
Your orders for their preſent diſpoſition.

[*Trumpet.—Enter* Daniſh Priſoners, Standards, &c. *(the Daniſh Standard laſt.) Then* Harold, Oſcar, Reginald, *and* Sir Piers *in Chains.*

Edgar. When valour with humanity combin'd
In a brave enemy demands our praiſe,
We ſtrive to make captivity unfelt:
Strike off his bonds—they not diſhonour him,
But ſhame ourſelves: though in the field thy foe,
Look on me, Harold, henceforth as thy friend.

Harold. You break theſe chains to give me ſtronger bonds:
Though now a captive, yet I tax not fate,
Since I was conquer'd by the *firſt* of Britons.

Ray. (to the Officers.) The reſt muſt now ſubmit to ſhort confinement, But

But uſe them well, with tenderneſs and honour.—
I now with tranſport learn, our royal maſter
From Edington returns with conqueſt crown'd:
Their future fate depends upon the will
Of royal Alfred, merciful as brave. [*Exit with* Guards.

[Sir Piers *remains.*

Groſ. (to Sir Piers.) Stop, thou inſatiate fiend! no more a brother!—
Nature diſclaims thee as unfit to herd
Even with the wolves of yonder howling foreſt:
But my reproaches are as idle air,
If conſcience ſlumber ſtill within thy ſoul.

Mau. Thou wretch! who loſt to every ſenſe of virtue,
Hadſt paſs'd to greatneſs through a brother's blood—
But Heaven defeated the inhuman purpoſe:
Thy ſecret arts are open now as day;
Our private wrongs by thee might paſs away
And be forgiven. But who ſhall pardon him,
Who by inſidious arts could aid our foes
To ſpread their impious conqueſts o'er his Country?
Who ſteeps his dagger in the vital ſtream
Of her who gave him birth? The height of guilt,
The worſt pre-eminence thou haſt attain'd,
And ſtamp'd the coward's with the traitor's name,
The blackeſt in the chronicles of hell.

Ray. (to Anſelm.) The painful taſk, good Anſelm, muſt be yours,
Quick to prepare this wretch to meet his doom.

Edw.

Edw. (kneeling to Raymond.) My gracious lord, if
your Edwina's prayers
Ere touch'd your heart, O let them now prevail,
And turn your ever gentle heart to mercy!
Too true, his crimes are of the deepeſt dye;
Yet ſtill I ſee in him my Groſmont's brother.
Let not this happy day be ſtain'd with blood:
Conſider how that mind is charg'd with guilt!
Which years, not days, require to waſh away.
My deareſt lord, let me not kneel in vain!

Groſ. Exalted goodneſs! Mercy's faireſt form!
Thy wrongs forgiv'n, can I retain revenge?
Ah! no.—*(To Piers)* May deepeſt penitence be thine,
And ſtrong remorſe efface the ſtains of guilt!
If you, my lord, a traitor can forgive,
Let me not for a brother plead in vain.

Anſ. Mercy, the darling attribute of Heaven,
Ne'er ſhew'd ſo lovely to my moiſten'd eye.
Let the all-waking monitor within,
Arouſe repentance! Shall we bear the ſword
Of juſtice *only*, and with impious hand
Snatch from avenging Heaven the dreadful bolt?
No: as you hope for bleſſings on your houſe
And this auſpicious union—bend to mercy.

Ray. Enjoy your wiſh, but under theſe conditions,
That *he*, we ſpare, ſhall never more appear,
On pain of death, within the bounds of Streanſhall.

Piers. That death you menace, like a gentle ſleep,
Would be my refuge from unpitied ſhame,
And ſtill the terrors of awaken'd conſcience;

But now my agoniſing mind looks forward
And trembles on the precipice that frowns
Upon that darkſome ſea of hopes and fears.
Farewell to all! Deny me not your prayers,
While I repair to Giſeburn's* hallow'd fane,
And there, by rigid penitence and tears,
Attempt to waſh the ſtains of guilt away. [*Exit.*

ANSELM.

Ambition thus by virtue unconfin'd,
From crime to crime leads on the daring mind;
Awhile her ſons on eagles' pinions ſoar,
Then, like the meteor ſink, to riſe no more:
But who can paint the ſcenes of endleſs woe,
The horrors that from civil diſcord flow?
When violated Nature bleeding lies,
Her deareſt rights the mournful ſacrifice—
While the exulting foe the furies guide,
And the wide breach receives the hoſtile tide?—
No longer then may diſcord rear her creſt,
But union reign in every Britiſh breaſt:
Let fortune ſmile, or frown, ſhe ſtill ſhall find
Our firmeſt phalanx, an unconquer'd mind:
Her ſons in arms, her floating bulwarks round,
Britannia ſtill ſhall riſe, with honour crown'd!
Long Freedom hail, with Monarchy combin'd,
And Alfred's royal race ſtill bleſs mankind.

End of the Play.

EPILOGUE,

* The priory of Giſeburn in Cleveland, now called Guiſborough.

EPILOGUE, BY THE AUTHOR.

Spoken by Mr. DARLEY.

THUS hath our Bard, with pencil dipp'd in gore,
And hand advent'rous, ſketched days of yore,
When, clad in ſteel, amidſt ſurrounding foes,
To ſave his Country, royal Alfred roſe,
He who the olive round his ſword entwin'd,
The mildeſt, wiſeſt, braveſt of mankind;
Who fram'd thoſe laws that tyranny reſtrain,
And bade Britannia rule the azure main:
Whom warm imagination, from the ſky,
Sees on his Albion fix'd his awful eye,
That views the bolt launch'd forth on faithleſs foes,
By thoſe who from his bright example roſe,
Who in his Country's boſom plac'd his throne,
And made his people's happineſs his own.

Long ſhall her gallant Howe Britannia mourn,
And palms eternal flouriſh round his urn;
He who on high her crimſon ſtandard bore,
The father of her navy—now no more!
Yet ſtill the tears of grateful Albion flow,
And memory embalms the name of Howe:
No monument he needs, while Calpe's towers
Frown ſtern defiance to Iberia's powers:
While glowing Phœbus ſhines on Biſcay's Bay,
Still ſhall his Country hail the glorious day.

When

When Neptune gave the trident to his hand,
And bade him ocean's utmoſt bounds command,
Fix on the ſea-girt rock his Sovereign's throne,
And with Britannia's honours mix his own.

Glory, beam forth! again thy rays be ſhed
With dazzling luſtre round St. Vincent's head,
He, who deſpiſing numbers on the main,
With Britiſh thunder ſhook the ſhores of Spain,
Where Gades ſaw her floating bulwarks fall,
And mourn'd, too late, alliance with the Gaul.

Nor Warren, ſhall thy fame remain unſung,
While Eirin's harp ſhall be to valour ſtrung;
Though wint'ry ſkies, with miſty horrors frown'd,
Still did thy ſquadron form her ſtrongeſt mound.

No longer treaſon's ſtandard mocks the wind,
But Britain's ſons, invincibly combin'd,
Saw crimſon victory her hero crown,
On that proud day—the day of Camperdown,
When, with Batavia's ſtandard, Duncan bore
Eight floating trophies to Britannia's ſhore.

See! by the ſulph'rous flaſh, 'midſt cannons' roar,
An armed ghoſt majeſtic ſtalk the ſhore;
Its awful brows with blooming laurel crown'd,
An eye that caſts terrific glare around,—
View on his helm the eagle's plumage gleam,
When god-like he ſubdu'd the Granic ſtream;
Burſting the cearments of his marble tomb,
Great Alexander riſes through the gloom,
And 'midſt contending ſtorms of hoſtile fire,
Beholds the hopes of haughty Gaul expire;
While Fame, from Pompey's column ſends the ſound
Of Britiſh triumph to the ſhores around,
And riſing bright through thick'ning ſmoke and flame,
To future ages wafts a Nelſon's name.

Now

Now chilling blaſts deform the parting year,
And ſable clouds o'erſpread our hemiſphere;
From hope's fair tree that lately brav'd the ſky,
Bow'd by the ſtorm, the ſcatter'd bloſſoms fly,
Yet ſtill the trunk remains, and genial ſpring,
With tepid breath, freſh flowers and fruits may bring.

Long ſhall the Britiſh Muſe with tearful ſtrains
Embalm her ſons who fell on Belgia's plains;
Though angry ſkies and adverſe fortune frown'd,
Yet honour ſtill their daring efforts crown'd;
And Britain hails returning to her ſtrand,
Th' illuſtrious Chieftain and his valiant band.

O! may our foes, of tranſient triumphs vain,
Bid their united navies plough the main;
Soon ſhall our rubid croſs exalted fly,
And Engliſh oak their utmoſt powers defy:
Again her vengeful thunder on them hurl'd,
Our Albion ſhall command the wat'ry world.

FINIS.

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G.R. III.

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N. J. [i.e. John Nixon]

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